

Protecting and Serving: What Actually Matters
to Young, Black Men in Durham, North Carolina

by

Ajenai Clemmons

Public Policy
Duke University

Date: _____

Approved:

Deondra Rose, Advisor

William Darity, Jr.

Ben Grunwald

Jay Pearson

Jessi Streib

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in
Public Policy in the Graduate School
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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

Young Black men in neighborhoods with high levels of poverty and intensive policing have a greater risk of violent death—both at the hands of civilians and police—than any other demographic group in the United States. Yet, there is a dearth of academic research that examines safety and what constitutes legitimate policing from this demographic’s perspective. In this dissertation, I conduct two-hour qualitative interviews of 21 young Black men living in Durham, NC to examine how they assess police and their desired police reforms. Chapters focus on participants’ (1) criteria for judging how well police are doing; (2) ideal attributes of officers well-suited to carry out their vision of policing; and (3) standards for building and maintain trust. I find that participants are principally concerned with the unpredictable nature of policing. Their reforms center on forging a police force that is predictable and reliable, and whose actions reflect a government contract they are owed as American citizens and, more importantly, human beings. Findings enrich our theoretical understanding of what this population believes would need to change to ensure their communities *are* and *feel* safe. Each substantive chapter concludes with policy recommendations for police departments and municipal leaders.

Dedication

I thank God, my Heavenly Creator, who purposed me for this time and place, and who led me to and through my time here at the Sanford School of Public Policy at Duke University.

This dissertation is dedicated to the 21 residents of Durham, North Carolina I interviewed who shared their time, thoughts, feelings, confessions, and aspirations. To Marcus, Tommy, Joseph, Malcolm, Jay, Otis, Justin, Derek, Elijah, Ellis, Malachi, Malik, Anthony, Jonathan, Jordan, Kevin, Sean, Carlos, Nathan, and Travis: thank you for trusting me with your precious insights and hopes for a transformed policing—a policing we would all choose for ourselves.

To my earthly creators and influencers, and life-time support system: thank you Mom and Dad, Deborah and Joseph Jr., and your respective spouses, Clarence and Mary; my brother, Joseph III; sister and brother-in-law, Danielle and Jeremy; nephews, London and Mekhi; grandparents, Vernon and Marion, Joseph Sr. and Fran; Aunt Angela; Cousin Maxwell; Uncle Emeer and Aunt Olga; and Aunt Susan. Thank you to the love of my life, Peter Adeyeye, for being the gift I never knew I needed.

Thank you to my Duke mates and cheerleaders, thought partners and editors: Katy Hansen and Emily Rains, Kelly Hunter, Sarah Cross, Libbie Schrader, Elliot Mamet, Mike Burrows, Nivedhitha Subramanian, Emily Pakhtigian, Nicole Barnes, Rob

Fetter, Jaron Wharton, Romina Tomé, Anil Ganti, Laura Bellows, Sierra Smucker, Anika Schenck-Fontaine, and Becca Lehrman. Thank you to the fabulous friends and members of Black Ladies' Lunch who mentored me and to whom I paid it forward: Kristen Cooksey-Stowers, Adebola Olayinka, Zoelene Hill, Danielle Purifoy, Maria Nagawa, Jasmine Smith, Imari Smith, Adrienne Jones, M'Balou Camara, Leann McLaren, Pamela Zabala, and Jaelyn Nixon. Thank you to my Kenan bandmates who helped me maintain sanity with the funnest outlet of music-making: Wayne Norman, Amber Diaz Pearson, Brian Spisiak, and Hannah Ridge.

Thank you to David Skidmore, Professor of International Relations, and Art Sanders, Professor of Political Science both at Drake University, who checked in on me and my academic progress, offering sage counsel and timely encouragement. Thank you to Kevin Hudson who helped me find the Sanford School of Public Policy Ph.D. Program during my grad school search, which fit me perfectly and who suggested applying to the American Political Science Association Minority Fellows Program, which smoothed the workforce-to-Ph.D. student transition. Thank you to Kansas State Representative Barbara Ballard, former Colorado Governor Richard Lamm, and Professor David Skidmore for writing my reference letters for admission to Duke.

Finally, thank you to my Durham community, Christine Wright, Scottie Seawell, Andrae Banks, Andrew Flynn, and the congregation of Union Baptist Church, who helped make this wonderful city feel like home and helped me feel cared for.

Contents

Abstract.....	iv
List of Tables	xi
List of Figures	xii
Acknowledgements	xiii
1. Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
1.1 Theoretical Foundations	3
Profiling and Racial Authoritarianism.....	4
How Policing is Placed.....	5
Adverse Impacts of Injurious Policing.....	5
Black Perspectives in Qualitative Research.....	6
Police Solicitation of Community Input	7
Legitimacy, Police Effectiveness, and Procedural Justice	9
1.2 Research Questions and Contribution.....	12
1.3 Research Design.....	16
Research Site: Durham, North Carolina.....	17
Sampling and Recruitment.....	19
1.4 Data.....	22
1.5 Conclusion	25
2. Chapter Two: How Police are Judged.....	27
2.1 Participants' General Orientation Toward Police	29

2.2 Participants' Assessment Criteria for Policing	37
2.2.1 Theme Rank #1 (Tied): Stop Harming & Threatening Us.....	40
2.2.2 Theme Rank #1 (Tied): Be Part of the Community	42
2.2.3 Theme Rank #2: Protect Us From Criminal Threats	45
2.2.4 Theme Rank #3: Mediate & Problem-Solve	48
2.2.5 Theme Rank #4: Do What's Right	50
2.2.6 Discussion of Themes – Interpretation of Results.....	52
2.3. Policy Recommendations	55
2.3.1. Stop Harming & Threatening Us.....	55
2.3.2. Be Part of the Community	57
2.3.3. Protect Us from Criminal Threats	58
2.3.4. Mediate & Problem-Solve.....	59
2.3.5. Do What's Right.....	59
2.4. Conclusion.....	60
3. Chapter Three: The Ideal Behavioral Profile of a Police Officer	62
3.1 Participants' Ideal Officer Traits, Behaviors, & Values	63
3.1.1 Theme Rank #1: Just	65
3.1.2 Theme Rank #2: Dedicated Professional	71
3.1.3 Theme Rank #3: Communicative	74
3.1.4 Theme Rank #4: Invested.....	79
3.1.5 Theme Rank #5 (Tied): Composed	82
3.1.6 Theme Rank #5 (Tied): Discerning & Adaptive	86

3.2 Discussion	92
3.2.1 Connections to Assessment Criteria by Theme.....	94
3.3. Policy Recommendations	98
3.4 Conclusion	101
4. Chapter Four: Raising the Level of Trust.....	103
4.1 Participants' Views About Trust	104
4.1.1 Reasons for Trusting the Police	111
4.1.2 Reasons for Not Trusting the Police	113
4.1.2.1 Frame #1: Self-Reflective Reasoning.....	114
4.1.2.2 Frame #2: Structural Reasoning	119
4.1.2.3 Frame #3: Officer Behavior Reasoning.....	122
4.1.3 How Police Can Increase Trust.....	135
4.1.3.1 Humility	135
4.1.3.2 Peace-bringers.....	137
4.1.3.3 Community Stewards.....	140
4.1.4 Personal Relationships with Law Enforcement	144
4.1.4.1 Summary of Relationships.....	144
4.1.4.2 Linkages Between Relationships and Trust	147
4.2 Discussion	152
4.3 Policy Recommendations	155
4.4 Conclusion	156
5. Chapter Five: Conclusion.....	158

5.1 Limitations	163
5.2 Significance of this Study	166
Appendix A – Interview Guide.....	168
References.....	174
Biography	182

List of Tables

Table 1: Sample Profile	22
Table 2: General Orientation Toward Police Officers	30
Table 3: Criteria Assessment Theme Rank by Comments and Case	39
Table 4: Ideal Officer Behavior Profile Theme Rank by Comments and Case	64
Table 5: Mapping Assessment Criteria onto Behavioral Profile	93
Table 6: Personal Relationships with Law Enforcement	145

List of Figures

Figure 1: Do You Trust Police?	106
Figure 2: Do You Know Any Police Personally?	144
Figure 3: Relationship & Willingness to Trust, Binary Categories	149
Figure 4: Relationships & Willingness to Trust, All Five Categories.....	150

Acknowledgements

I could not have prevailed without the phenomenal mentorship of Dr. Deondra Rose, my advisor since day one of my Ph.D. journey. It has been such a privilege and honor to have learned under her tutelage and guidance every step of the way. I thank Dr. Rose for her meticulous attention to detail on each draft and her thoughtful feedback, as well as the countless hours meeting with me over the past six years. In addition to her direct investment in me, I am grateful for her powerful example. Unquestionably, my future students will benefit from my having gotten a front-row seat to Professor Rose's Politics of Policymaking Course. I could never overstate how impactful it has been to observe Dr. Rose up close as a scholar, a teacher, a leader in service, and a remarkable human being.

William "Sandy" Darity, Jr. has cultivated my growth as a scholar, listening to and discussing my ideas, as well as giving me so many opportunities to analyze scholarly work and add my perspective as a discussant to several important conversations related to equity. Like Dr. Rose, Dr. Darity's letters of support have made it possible for me to raise all of the money needed for this project and future work, and enjoy unique training along the way. It was also an honor and privilege to call the Samuel DuBois Cook Center for Social Equity, which Dr. Darity helms, my academic home within Duke. Dr. Gwen Wright, Ms. JoAnn O'Neal, Dr. Keisha Bentley-Edwards,

Dr. Adam Hollowell, and Dr. Salima El-Amin worked in concert with Dr. Darity to nurture and encourage me to become an academic.

Dr. Jessi Streib taught me qualitative methods. In taking her class, I began my journey to understand the art, science, and power of qualitative inquiry. Her course, both compelling and fun, challenging and insightful, provided the foundation for this study and served as a mental model for how I would like to teach my own courses in the not-too-distant future. Dr. Streib has been an astute mentor, providing invaluable feedback on my dissertation drafts.

Dr. Jay Pearson, an utter force of nature in the Sanford School of Public Policy, has sharpened my thinking on intersectional equity, particularly in terms of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and place. He has deepened my understanding of the health effects of racism and the physiological necessity of self-care as a matter of existing while Black. I have learned from Dr. Pearson both in his public lectures and in our many conversations, in which he has graciously permitted me to think aloud and share budding ideas.

Dr. Ben Grunwald's incisive questions have always pushed me to clearer understanding. His careful reads of my drafts and subsequent comments have forced me to distill key points and their significance. Dr. Grunwald has included me in workshops he spearheaded with some of America's sharpest legal minds and modeled roles both as a discussant and author receiving feedback.

My teaching assistantships with Dr. Nicholas Carnes served as apprenticeships that not only taught and prepared me to develop course curricula, but gave me a taste of the joy and reward of helping students to grow. Dr. Carnes also helped me discover my own leadership and management style in coaching and supporting other instructional team members. I appreciate Dr. Carnes's feedback on papers, conference presentations, and job talks, his positive encouragement to pursue academia, and his commitment to my success.

Ms. Lisa Kukla has been a fixture of my time at Duke. As the Director of Academics and Student Services for Sanford's Ph.D. Program, Ms. Kukla has been there every step of the way to help me and my colleagues understand what lies ahead, how to prepare for milestones, how to take advantage of our resources (which she has often helped secure on our behalf), and how to avoid pitfalls. In addition to benefitting from her immense institutional knowledge and general know-how to be able to thrive at Sanford, I have also enjoyed working with Ms. Kukla on Sanford's Committee for Diversity and Inclusion to make Sanford an even better home.

I am grateful for the mentorship of Dr. Kristin Goss, who lent her keen insight as an outside reader for my dissertation and job talk preparation; Dr. Seth Sanders who helped me develop my dissertation prospectus and research agenda; Ms. Penny Sanders who spent many, many hours helping me revise my job talk and practice for interviews; Dr. Judith Kelley who helped me navigate the job market who has maintained an open-

door policy for students, leading Sanford steadily through the pandemic as dean; Dr. Subhrendu Pattanayak who has been a champion of students as Director of Graduate Studies for Sanford's Ph.D. Program; Dr. Melissa Bostrom and Dr. J. Alan Kendrick, with whom I have so enjoyed serving on the Graduate Student Affairs Advisory Committee and whose work uplifting students' academic, professional, and emotional development has benefitted me; and Dr. Paula D. McClain whose vision has led to a more equitable Duke, Midwest Political Science Association, and American Political Science Association, and whose leadership has allowed me to secure fellowships and grants that have advanced my education and research.

I also acknowledge the following Duke faculty whose classes I took in the Public Policy School and Political Science Department: Dr. Fritz Mayer, Dr. Billy Pizer, Dr. Kerry Haynie, Dr. Georg Vanberg, Dr. John Aldrich, and Dr. Sunshine Hillygus. These professors graciously permitted me to write papers about policing, applying content I learned from their courses in public policy analysis, racial and ethnic politics, political institutions, American politics, and survey methodology.

In addition to training at Duke, I was fortunate to gain external training that was critical to the formation of my dissertation ideas. In 2017, I attended the week-long Summer Dissertation Proposal Workshop hosted by Howard University's Center on Race and Wealth and University of Wisconsin – Madison's Institute for Research on Poverty, which helped me develop my research questions and literature review. I am

particularly grateful to workshop leaders Dr. Janet Griffin-Graves and Dr. Lawrence M. Berger; presenters Dr. Sarah Halpern-Meekin and Dr. Haydar Kurban; my mentor throughout the week, Dr. Rodney Green.

In 2018, I attended the Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Method Research at Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Government to advance my knowledge of in-depth interviewing and ethnography within the context of political science. I am especially grateful to program leader Dr. Colin Enman and my trainers Dr. Diana Kapiszewski and Dr. Lauren M. MacLean, Dr. Timothy Pachirat and Dr. Fred Schaffer.

I also wish to acknowledge Dr. Hannah L. Walker and Dr. Andrea Headley who served as discussants for Chapter 2 of my dissertation at the 2020 annual conferences of the American Political Science Association and Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management Annual Conference respectively.

The final set of people I wish to acknowledge are those who helped me develop strategies to not only sustain my dissertation work but prepare me for my next stages of life. All of these amazing women have taught me enduring lessons regarding my mental and emotional, nutritional and physical, and spiritual well-being in order to incorporate self-care as a way of life (in order of when we began working together): Dr. Mazella Fuller, Ms. Toni Ann Apadula, Dr. Anita-Yvonne Bryant, Dr. Felicia Tittle, and Dr. Erikka Dzirasa.

1. Chapter One: Introduction

I would tell [politicians about] the economy and jobs. I feel like things like that would make policing a little easier, because if everyone, or a more ... a higher percentage of people were stable and not homeless and things like that, then the police job would be easier, because there probably would be a lot less crime on the street. Also, make sure minorities know that they're heard. Not just minorities, but the working and poorer class in general. I would probably tell the president, but not this specific one, 'cause I don't think he would listen anymore.

Nathan, 30
February 2020

In 2020, Black males comprised the largest share of civilian homicide victims at almost 50% of the 13,927 total (FBI, Table 1, 2020).¹ Irrespective of race, ethnicity, or gender, the 20-24 and 25-29 age cohorts contained the largest share of victims. For Black victims, nearly 40% fell into just these two age cohorts (FBI, Table 2, 2020). Black males—particularly teenagers and young men in economically distressed communities—also face the highest risk of being killed by police of any American demographic, with an estimated peak risk 2.8 times that of White men between the ages 25-29. This latter disparity is particularly notable given that peak mortality risk for all groups occurs between ages 20-35 when it comes to officer-involved deaths (Preito-Hodge &

¹ Black men suffered from both a higher rate of victimhood and had the highest absolute numbers of any demographic, including White men—7,484 vs. 5,787 in 2019. Black women had lower absolute numbers compared to White women but higher rates of victimhood—1,035 vs. 1,759.

Tomaskovic-Devey, 2020; Edwards, Lee, & Esposito, 2019; Petrocelli, Piquero, & Smith, 2003; Jacobs & O'Brien, 1998; Jacobs & Britt, 1979). Among women, Blacks and Native Americans face the highest risk of being killed by police, although women's risk is estimated to be about 20 times lower than men's (Edwards, Lee, & Esposito, 2019).

While young Black men are the most exposed group in the United States to these extreme safety threats, they also bear the brunt of more common dangers at the hands of police. As Gau and Brunson (2015) write, police in economically distressed, high-crime neighborhoods have been shown to be more likely to profile minorities, use greater force, and commit serious misconduct. It is unsurprising, then, that researchers have also found those living in such neighborhoods to be negatively disposed toward police (Carr, Napolitano, & Keating, 2007; Reisig & Parks, 2000; Sampson and Bartusch, 1998). But, as relatively few researchers have found when examining Black people's perceptions of the police, the situation is more complicated than that—the picture muddier...the waters murkier.

In this introduction chapter, I will offer a selective overview of the scholarly literature on policing. I will describe my study to understand how young Black men in heavily policed communities assess how well the police are doing and understand their desired reforms. I will share a summary of the interview sample and conclude with an outline of the dissertation.

1.1 Theoretical Foundations

Scholars of sociology, legal studies, criminology, criminal justice, public health, geography, social psychology, history, and ethnic studies have devoted a great deal of attention to policing in the United States. A small but growing community of political scientists has added substantial contributions to policing's interdisciplinary literatures.² The following overview highlights work on racial authoritarianism and how policing operates differently by place in order to show how policing style varies dramatically for

² Researchers have traced the political development of policing, connecting the “historical arc” of Slave Patrols and Jim Crow to modern policing, in order to contextualize the scope of policing's impact on African Americans and other marginalized communities (Russell-Brown, 2017; Flynn, Holmberg, Warren, & Wong, 2017; Murakawa, 2008). Journalist Doug Blackmon (2008) uses thousands of archival records to show how, from post-Civil War to World War II, America exploited a loophole in the 13th Amendment outlawing slavery—except for criminal conviction—to construct and scale its penal system via convict leasing. Historian Carol Anderson (2016) details state violence by local law enforcement and state-sanctioned terror led by private White citizens, in order to end Reconstruction and reinstate a racial caste system. Civil rights attorney Michelle Alexander (2010) carries this thread through the 20th century in the state's “law and order” response to the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements to deploy mass incarceration and expansion of “punitive doctrine.” Political scientist Vesla Weaver (2007) theorizes this “frontlash” as a political strategy made possible by capitalizing on White fear to reframe so-called riots in racialized and criminal terms. In their tabulation of damages committed by the U.S. government against African Americans since its inception, economist William Darity, Jr. and arts and museum consultant Kirsten Mullen (2020) call attention to police brutality, and analogize past public lynchings to today's police fatalities which also do not generally bear accountability even when recorded.

young, Black men living in areas of concentrated disadvantage, and work that discusses the physical and mental health effects of such treatment. The vast majority of scholarship evaluating civilians' perceptions, attitudes, and satisfaction has been quantitative, so I highlight qualitative studies similar to this one. I also explain the circumstances under which law enforcement agencies might themselves solicit public input. Finally, I conclude by defining police legitimacy and why agencies desire it, and summarize two competing models said to lead to legitimacy—police effectiveness and procedural justice.

Profiling and Racial Authoritarianism

Racial profiling against African Americans has been documented through quasi-experimental studies, surveys, qualitative interviews, and public opinion polling (Baumgartner, Epp, & Shoub, 2018; McDonald Hutchins, 2017; Jones, 2014; Weitzer & Tuch, 2004; Weitzer & Tuch, 2002). Soss and Weaver (2017) find policing practices in “race-class subjugated communities” to be exceptionally repressive, violent, and extractive, the latter of which is defined as exacting financial penalties for infractions that are small or conjured up to raise revenue. Carbado (2016) also argues the treatment of African American communities is structural rather than the result of individual rogue actors and identifies six pillars of police violence. These include over-exposure to police

surveillance, repeated interactions, racially biased training and cultural norms, allies who justify violence, qualified immunity, and indemnification of officers.

How Policing is Placed

Disparate treatment in the context of democracy is made more efficient with neighborhood segregation (Bailey, Krieger, Agénor, Graves, Linos, & Bassett, 2017). Police misconduct occurs in areas that are concentrated geographically, and whose physical sites also serve as a locus for multiple layers of economic and social vulnerability (Massey, 2012; Lacey & Soskice, 2015; Haney Lopez, 2011). Legal scholars Ben Grunwald and John Rappaport (2020) find in their study of 98,000 Florida law enforcement officers that poorly resourced communities are at particular risk of acquiring dangerous officers. “Wanderers” who have been previously fired for serious misconduct and moral character violations often land at smaller agencies in communities with slightly larger populations of color, and are more likely to be fired again than rookies or veterans who have never been fired.

Adverse Impacts of Injurious Policing

Numerous studies find that civilians’ negative encounters with police can accumulate and lead to perceptions of injustice as well as internalized fear and stress (Hagan, Shedd, & Payne, 2005). Public health scholars and social scientists assert that injurious policing can cause sustained anxiety and other mental and physical effects on

direct recipients as well as those who experience it vicariously (Bor, Venkataramani, Williams, & Tsai, 2018; Boyd 2018; Geller, Fagan, Tyler, & Link 2014). For example, in their quasi-experimental study, Bor and colleagues estimate that the poor mental health spillover effects of police shootings of unarmed Black people on other African Americans living in the same state, is equivalent to about three-quarters of the mental health burden of diabetes. The toll of direct and vicarious trauma has been shown to worsen overall relations between the police and Black communities, lowering trust, respect, and confidence (McDonald Hutchins, 2017; Belen 2018; Eterno, Barrow, & Silverman, 2016; Brunson, 2007; PolicyLink, 2001).

Black Perspectives in Qualitative Research

Various researchers have conducted in-depth interviews (Brunson & Miller, 2006) and focus groups (Brooks, Ward, Euring, Townsend, White & Hughes, 2016) in order to probe civilians' perceptions of police officers (Calvert, Brady, & Jones-Webb, 2020), their experiences with officers and the nature of the relationship (Brunson, 2007), and how they believe police could reduce crime (Wilkinson, Beaty, & Lurry, 2009). Some of these studies include male and female participants (Brunson & Miller, 2006) and others compare Black and White (Hagan, Shedd, & Payne, 2005) as well as Latinx youth (Carr, Napolitano, & Keating, 2007).

In their novel method, political scientists Vesla Weaver and Gwen Prowse use “portals,” or technology-enhanced shipping containers placed in various Black and Latinx communities across the U.S. and in Mexico City to allow confidential conversations between individuals in heavily policed communities. A simple prompt initiates the conversations, which are recorded. Their studies find that participants evaluate police as ineffective due to being both everywhere and nowhere in their “distorted responsiveness” (Prowse, Weaver, & Meares, 2020). They also find participants—in contrast to prevailing theories of low citizen political knowledge—have sophisticated understanding of how the democratic state should work and actually works in practice. Having “too much knowledge and too little power” leads these civilians to distance themselves from police oversight, avoiding them whenever possible (Weaver, Prowse, & Piston, 2019).

Police Solicitation of Community Input

Following community backlash to proactive policing initiatives that saturate certain areas with increased presence and contact, some police departments have recognized their need for community support in order to do their jobs and have issued surveys to gather community input. According to the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs (Undated), nearly one-third of police departments surveyed reported that they conduct community surveys. For agencies surveyed that have at least 100 officers,

this figure rises to about half. Such community surveys aim to gauge civilian satisfaction with questions about safety, bias, confidence, and performance. Though departments attempt to draw a representative sample, disadvantaged community members tend to be substantially under-represented among respondents. This is also true of in-person community meetings conducted by departments, which usually invite input from residents about neighborhood crime or other problems they see as priorities. Such meetings tend to be disproportionately utilized by those favorable to police—usually among the most economically and politically advantaged groups (Belen, 2018; Harris West, 2001).

Prompted by either federal consent decree or local pressures, a much smaller subset of departments have made intentional efforts to solicit input from their most impacted communities. New York City is one such example. Complying with a court-ordered remedy following its unconstitutionally implemented “Stop and Frisk” policy, the New York City Stop & Frisk Joint Remedial Process Facilitation Team engaged in a rigorous process of conducting 64 focus groups of 516 people followed by 28 community forums with 1,777 people in which impacted communities were prioritized. The team analyzed responses and issued 14 recommendations for reform (Belen, 2018).

Legitimacy, Police Effectiveness, and Procedural Justice

There have been decades-long arguments with scholars and practitioners on both sides making claims about what is most important to civilians' satisfaction with police. Traditionally, many have deemed police effectiveness to be of paramount concern to civilians. The police effectiveness model asserts civilians care most about officer and agency competence, believing the core function of police is to keep them safe from harm by preventing crime, catching criminals, dealing with unruliness, and solving crimes (Tankebe, 2013; Jackson & Bradford, 2009). Van Craen and Skogan (2015) gauge civilians' expectations of security in a survey asking Belgians to rate how safe they feel walking after dark in their neighborhood and their municipality, since fear of crime and victimization are known to erode confidence in law enforcement. Surveys measuring perceptions of officer effectiveness also ask respondents to rate officers and agencies on their professionalism, knowledge, response time and service delivery regarding emergencies, follow-through on promised actions, and referrals to government agencies if applicable (Tankebe, 2008; Wells, 2007).

An agency's effectiveness at controlling or solving crime legitimates the agency's authority in the eyes of civilians. Governments desire to be seen as legitimate, because instead of the state compelling compliance or cooperation solely due to its legal authority, legitimacy is the moral authority that inspires deference. Legitimacy is an

internal feeling civilians have of a duty to obey police, because they are trustworthy figures who deserve their deference (Jackson, Bradford, Hough, Myhill, Quinton, & Tyler, 2012). Institutional legitimacy can also result from the public's ability to access and understand its rules, a belief it is serving the public good, and trust that its agents are carrying out its core mission (Gau & Brunson, 2015).

Sunshine and Tyler (2003) posit that whereas judgments of police action as *unfair* may lead to civilian "alienation, defiance, and noncooperation," judgments of police as *fair* will lead civilians to view police as legitimate, to cooperate with them, and even to support policies that strengthen police discretion. Tom Tyler, Tracey Meares, and other colleagues developed the procedural justice model of policing to explain how legitimacy may be achieved (Meares, 2013). They assert civilians' evaluations rely on whether police agencies and officers use fair procedures in both their decision-making and treatment (Dai & Nation, 2009). The model is also called the fairness model or process-based model because its proponents contend that even when police cannot attain the outcomes one or more party desires, they can often still achieve some level of satisfaction if the party or parties believe the officer(s) used a fair process. The model has four key components: (1) participation or allowing civilians a voice, (2) neutrality and transparency, (3) respect and dignity, and (4) communicating a sincere interest in people's well-being (Meares & Tyler, 2017).

A police-civilian interaction that is considered fair, first and foremost, allows participation. Tyler finds that people are more satisfied when they have the opportunity to communicate their perspective and/or explain their situation prior to the officer making a decision. He asserts the ability to have genuine input into the decision-making process is vital in the belief that an outcome was reached fairly. Neutrality is the model's second component. Tyler finds that when people believe no one is advantaged, there is transparency, and the rules of the road are clear and objective, they are more likely to perceive the process as fair. Third, Tyler finds people value being treated with dignity and respect. He concludes that when officers are polite and acknowledge people's rights, it affirms them as valued members of society and leads them to be more likely to accept the officers' decision even when unfavorable. Last, Tyler determines that when officers communicate sincere interest in people's well-being, it signals trustworthiness. He finds people do not trust a process as fair if they consider the one in charge of the process untrustworthy. Thus, officers can express benevolent intentions by explaining their decisions and showing they considered civilians' needs and concerns (Tyler, 2004).

Researchers have used a combination of surveys and observational data of traffic stops to determine whether police effectiveness or procedural justice is more likely than the other to lead to legitimacy (Donner, Maskaly, Fridell, & Jennings, 2015; Dai, Frank, & Sun, 2011; Wells, 2007). Procedural justice has been deemed a "more important" factor in

representative samples of U.S. cities like Cincinnati, Omaha, and New York (Huq, Tyler, & Schulhofer, 2011).

1.2 Research Questions and Contribution

Very few qualitative studies have been conducted specifically exploring relationships between legitimacy, procedural justice, and police effectiveness. There are at least three benefits to qualitative inquiry.

First, open-ended questions allow respondents to communicate nuanced views that may complicate our previous understanding of certain attitudes and concerns, which would not be ascertainable in close-ended survey options or researchers' observations of traffic stops. Second, open-ended questions allow people to use their own words to explain concepts such as trust, confidence, safety, respect, and fairness—which are operationalized to test claims of legitimacy, procedural justice, and police effectiveness. Understanding how civilians who interact the most with police make sense of these words, can add richness and depth to our theoretical understanding of both these concepts' meanings and what people want from police. Third, open-ended questions allow insight into other considerations at top of mind for civilians when assessing police, which might be absent from a survey's short list of options. If priorities arise for civilians that are tangential or even unrelated to legitimacy, this would add to our theoretical understanding as well.

Moreover, there are normative reasons to allow open-ended questioning that may yield answers unrelated to legitimacy. My aim is not to empower the state by furthering its ability to gain public support. Rather, the purpose of the research is to understand how government could become legitimate where it is not, and do so for those who have the most to lose. Legal scholar Monica Bell writes pointedly about the hazards of a hyper-focus on legitimacy and procedural justice in policing:

The purpose of legitimacy theory is to understand how the state, from a moral perspective, justifies its power and how, as an empirical matter, it most effectively exercises its power over its subjects... legitimation is a bundle of processes that elites use to procure public buy-in to oppressive systems (pp. 2075-2076).³

While legitimacy, in the sense of public buy-in, may be a normal and reasonable aim of any government, Bell cautions against seeing it as a desirable end. Bell asserts that the chief aim should be for agencies to honor people's rights and freedoms while

³ Bell argues that procedural justice-related solutions exclude both litigation-based reforms and the provision of more just laws, while leaving intact the harmful legal structures causing illegitimacy in the first place. For example, in its online "survey toolkit," the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs offers tips to law enforcement agencies considering community surveys. After explaining its benefits, the office lists examples of topics and survey questions. For the topic of "legitimacy," the example question is "Should you trust the decisions made by the police, even if you think they are wrong?" This question is used among some scholars' measures in legitimacy literature (undoubtedly among the scholars Bell critiques). Yet, despite myriad available survey questions to measure legitimacy, it is *this* question the federal government offers as an exemplar (Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs, Undated).

providing them safety—not figure out how much freedom they can get people to agree to sacrifice by communicating in a respectful manner. After all, Bell implies, this is not how politically and economically powerful communities are policed, though crimes occur there as well.

Instead of focusing on how to maximize compliance and cooperation, I ask what this population threatened by dangerous criminals and injurious policing needs to be and feel safe. I ask them how they judge whether officers are doing a good job and how they respond when officers and agencies fail to meet their expectations. These broader questions help me understand what this population desires for police reforms.

This study centers the voices of 18-29 year-old African American men living in communities suffering from high crime, high poverty, and high police contact in order to understand how they make sense of and assess policing with the goal of offering tailored policy recommendations for municipal and police leaders. My research questions are the following:

1. How do civilians in heavily policed communities make sense of and assess police?
2. What policy preferences result from the criteria they use to assess police?

This study is unique in its combination of elements:

- a) Recruiting participants independently rather than using intermediary organizations.

- b) Focusing on young men 18-29 years-old, which aligns with their status as the largest share of victims of civilian and police homicide, as opposed to a wider band of Black men or a shifting to “youth” (early and mid-teens to about 24 years-old).
- c) Capitalizing on men’s experiences with police over time in order to query them about changes in perceptions since adolescence.
- d) Interviewing confidentially and one-on-one, to facilitate candor during sensitive topics.
- e) Allowing participants to convey positive, negative, and neutral experiences that are both direct and vicarious, and whose function is to serve as context for participants’ policy aims.
- f) Designing two-hour interviews (as opposed to less than an hour or 1-2 hours) and asking a variety of policy solution-focused questions, including the criteria by which participants judge police. The idea is to externalize the mental rubric these civilians use to assess policing and explain when, why, and how agencies miss the mark.
- g) Incrementally increasing the ambition (or infeasibility) of policy-focused questions over the course of the interview to prevent self-censorship of ideas and exhaust the participants’ ideas for reform.
- h) Soliciting policy preferences and priorities that extend beyond policing to participants’ broader quality-of-life goals.

I am not aware of any study that does (g) in any regard. I devised what I believe to be a novel interviewing technique in order to extract more of participant’s policy ideas, goals, and philosophies, with questions about their life experiences serving as context. In this technique, I ask policy-oriented questions regarding specific departmental actions or

values, such as trust and respect, which is consistent with other similar studies. However, my key contribution is questioning successively to mine participants for policy ideas—probing deeper from topical policy asks to general policy-oriented questions about what would increase their confidence, to how police could earn an A, how participants could wield magic wands to achieve perfect outcomes, and ultimately what would they change in their lives if they had the full attention and concern of anyone in power to fix or improve anything. See Appendix A for the complete list of interview questions.

1.3 Research Design

To examine how Black men in heavily policed communities assess police agencies and officers, I conducted 21 in-person interviews from December 2018 through January 2019 and from November 2019 to March of 2020.⁴ I suspended interviews due to COVID. These confidential interviews, averaging 2 hours and 11 minutes took place in a private room in a library in Durham, North Carolina. The interviews contained 33 open-ended questions and concluded with a brief survey, for a total of about 50 questions. I received approval from Duke University's Institutional Review Board to conduct this study prior to recruiting participants. All participants were compensated with \$50 cash.

⁴ Between January 2019 and November 2019, I conducted in-depth interviews for a related project in London, UK.

Research Site: Durham, North Carolina

Durham, North Carolina offers an excellent research site for interviewing young African American men. Of Durham's total population of 274,497, 37.3% or 102,387 are non-Hispanic Black or African American, compared to 39.2% White, 10.6% Hispanic, 5.4% Asian, and 2% Other (Data USA: Durham, NC, 2018). I used municipal and U.S. Census Bureau data to identify and rank neighborhoods with the highest concentrations of young Black men.⁵ I recruited from the neighborhoods that lay within the surveillance area for a Durham Police Department initiative called "Operation Bull's Eye" (Chalmer, Undated), which ran officially from 2007 to at least 2011.

In this initiative, officers saturated a 2-square mile area with more officers conducting more frequent rounds, stops, and searches of drivers and pedestrians with the goal of driving down gun violations, such as "shots fired," as well as disproportionately high violent gun crime rates (DPD, Year 2 Report, 2009).

Crescendoing complaints from community groups of racial profiling as recently as 2015

⁵ With assistance from Ms. Laura Woods, Senior Planner, Durham City-County Planning Department, via phone and e-mail correspondence March 26-28, 2018.

led to official abandonment of the program. Leaders also promised to change stop-and-search protocols and begin training on biased policing (DPD, 2016; Oppel, 2014).⁶

Still, the fact that there is a geographically defined area within Durham where residents, particularly teenagers at the time, faced sustained heavy patrolling, ensures that this population would have experienced some police interaction upon which they could base their opinions and, potentially, recommendations. And, it could serve as an important point of reference for participants noting any potential changes in their interactions with Durham police since.

Operation Bull's Eye encompassed the most "chronically distressed" area in Durham (De Marco & Hunt, 2018, p. 16). Its persistent, concentrated poverty results from decades of Jim Crow segregation, redlining, the 1960s and 70s uncompensated conversion of its Black middle-class neighborhoods into a highway corridor under an

⁶ Unrelenting police-community tensions (Baumgartner, Epp, & Love, 2014; DPD Executive Command Staff, October 2013 & December 2013) among many factors led to Durham hiring a new police chief in mid-2016 (Bridges, 2015). Following a nationwide search, Durham hired its first ever African American female police chief, Cerelyn "C.J." Davis, then-Deputy Chief for the Atlanta Police Department—a 30-year veteran of a large urban and majority-Black population with a record of operational improvements and improved community-police relations. As of April 2021, Durham began another nationwide search to replace Chief Davis who resigned to helm the Memphis Police Department.

“urban renewal” campaign, sustained disinvestment thereafter, and more recent targeted subprime lending that increased foreclosure rates. During the time of community protests and the police chief’s transition in 2016, poverty rates in three of the area’s census tracts ranged from 43.8% to 55.7%. The latter statistic is more than twice Durham’s African American poverty rate (23.5%), three times the City of Durham’s overall poverty rate (18.5%), and about four times the national poverty rate of 14% (De Marco & Hunt, 2018, Bishaw & Benson, 2017).

Sampling and Recruitment

My goal is to understand what typical young Black men in this context need and want in terms of policing policy. It is likely that a typical young Black man living in such an area would have several encounters with officers due to the outsized role of place-based factors described earlier (Brunson, 2007). Given this is a two-hour interview about policing, I sought participants whose opinions were generally based on lived experience rather than speculation, and whose hypothetical examples would be based on realistic scenarios. In my goal of selecting typical men from the area, I sought to balance the depth homogeneity offers with breadth afforded by heterogeneity in the number and type of interactions (Kapiszewski, Maclean, & Read 2015). For that reason, I did not limit my sample to those who had had multiple encounters or only negative encounters with police. I reasoned that if a substantial range of encounters existed, interviews might help

further our understanding of why that is or how that could occur. I also allowed for heterogeneity in educational attainment, family background (e.g., raised in single-parent versus two-parent household), incarceration history, and marital as well as parental status.

Selection relies on homogenous racial and ethnic as well as age characteristics. The three census tracts comprising the bulk of my recruitment area are 89.0% to 90.4% Black and Hispanic (De Marco & Hunt, 2018). I conducted on-the-ground recruitment in order to ensure participants lived in or near my area of interest, or that they heavily frequented the neighborhoods (usually for social reasons like visiting family or friends). Because of residential segregation in the U.S., I expected place-based recruitment to constrain socioeconomic range and exposure to various policing styles. For example, I did not recruit young Black men on or nearby a local historically Black college, as it would have made the sample too heterogeneous in socioeconomic status and experience with police departments across the state or country.

I used two selection criteria to increase the likelihood of my sample having had interactions with police. The first was limiting my sample to young men, who have been shown to have the highest likelihood of contact with police (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan, & Hoagwood, 2015). The second criterion was restricting my recruitment area to a community with an objective, documented history of heightened

police contact. Finally, I asked interviewees at the end of the interview to let me know if there was anyone they would recommend I reach out to, whom they believed would be interested in being contacted, or encourage that person to reach out to me. This type of snowball sampling is common when targeting hard-to-reach populations (Noy, 2008; Faugier & Sargeant, 1997).

I posted flyers at recreation and community centers; libraries; small businesses such as independently owned restaurants, convenience stores, and cell phone stores; as well as barber shops. At each place, I initiated conversations with personnel not only to request permission to leave or post flyers, but also to inform them about my study should anyone have questions.⁷ I also recruited participants directly at basketball open-gym hours during weekday evenings and weekend afternoons at recreation centers.

Prospective interviewees contacted me by e-mail or (more often) by text from contact information listed on the flyer. Or, if I recruited them in person, participants

⁷ I had the most extensive conversations at barber shops, where I was often vetted publicly. Upon entering, I would introduce myself as a researcher conducting a study and ask for permission to either leave or post information. One barber would usually respond and ask questions before telling me where I could hang and/or leave my flyers. In several instances, the questioning extended to between 30 minutes and well over an hour, and grew to include other barbers and patrons who began making inquiries and offering commentary. Questions included what I would do with the information once collected and analyzed, my reasoning for thinking change was possible, and my plan for helping to make a difference where others had failed.

provided me with their contact information, and I sent them a text to arrange a date and time for the interview. Of the 21 interviewees, I recruited 10 in person; nine were referred to me by a relative, friend, or barber; and two contacted me after seeing the flyer. I interviewed 20 participants in a private room in a local library, which offered privacy and convenience for participants, and one participant in a private area of a public park to accommodate his schedule.

1.4 Data

Table 1: Sample Profile

Demographics	Age – Mean: 24.5 years old Education – Mean: 12 th grade education Religion – 66% Christian Occupations – 86%, Mode: Construction at 29% Fatherhood – 52% 0 children, 24% 1 child
Family Composition	38% – Raised by single moms. 62% – Raised in full or part by father and/or stepfather with mom, or as single parent. 52% – Lived for period with non-parent or in foster care.
Legal Entanglement & Exposure to Violence	66% – Arrested at some point in their lives. 52% – Convicted at some point. 38% – Shot at least once 57% – Witnessed a stabbing, shooting, or murder.

My target recruitment age was 18-29 years old. The actual interviewees ranged from 20-31 years old with a mean age of 24.5 years. I allowed two 30 year-olds and one 31 year-old to participate because they were theoretically similar to 25-29 year-olds. The typical man had graduated from high school. The education range is eighth grade to a bachelor's degree. No men have parents or grandparents who are immigrants. Over

two-thirds identify religiously as Christian with the remainder stating they are Agnostic or unsure.

Eighty-six percent report holding jobs across the private, public, and non-profit sectors.⁸ Though participants report a wide range of occupations, including customer service, masonry, packaging and transportation, and janitorial services, the modal occupation is construction at 29%. Four participants live in a home that they or their family member owns with another participant in the process of renting to own; the remaining 16 participants rent their homes.

On average, participants live in a household of three people, including themselves. In terms of fatherhood, the range for participants having children is zero to four, with most (52%) having no children, roughly another quarter (24%) having one child, and the remaining quarter having 2-4 children. The typical participant's first experience with police occurred just shy of his thirteenth birthday but ranges from five years old to 22.

⁸ The other 14% was composed of one participant who reported receiving disability payments from a permanent disability due to multiple gunshots and two who reported working as professional drug dealers.

In terms of upbringing and previous exposure to violence, the sample contains striking juxtapositions. Participants' mother's education ranges from eighth grade to a master's degree with two-thirds having attained a high school diploma or post-secondary education.⁹ Thirty-eight percent were raised by a single mother throughout their lives. Four participants were raised by both biological parents under the same roof throughout adolescence. Fully 62% were raised by their mothers and fathers completely or prior to separation, their mothers and stepfathers, or their fathers as a single parent. Slightly more than half of participants experienced volatility within the household and its composition. Thus, 52% of interviewees had an extended living arrangement at some point in their lives with grandparents, parents' friends, neighbors, and/or foster care. Volatility was due to parental drug addiction, premature death due to homicide and chronic disease, intimate partner violence, incarceration, sudden disability, eviction, and socioeconomic struggles.

The sample's diversity is also evident in its exposure to violence and encounters with the criminal justice system. Participants estimated they had had as few as two interactions with police and as many as 100, though those at the higher end attributed

⁹ This excludes three mothers whose educational attainment were unknown by the participant.

the intense contact to their status as known drug dealers. Two-thirds had been arrested at some point in their lives, though slightly more than half had ever been convicted of a crime (52%). Seventy-one percent had been a victim of a crime and slightly over half had been a victim of a violent crime, such as being stabbed or robbed at gunpoint. Over one-third (38%) had been shot at least once, and 57% had witnessed a stabbing, shooting, or murder.

1.5 Conclusion

Whether reflecting on rebellious times in their adolescence when they wrestled with anger, insecurity, and recklessness, or discussing relatively recent behavior, participants relay detailed accounts of their interactions with police, even when unfavorable to themselves. Those who largely avoided danger by consuming themselves with sports, school, work, and home life, have also experienced a range of interactions with police that have led to complex views.

Chapter Two begins with an overview of participants' general feelings towards police and whether they have changed or remained the same. Then, participants explain how they judge whether police are doing a good job. After having identified how they assess police in Chapter Two, participants help us understand the kind of officer they believe is capable of carrying out their vision in Chapter Three. The third chapter covers participants' ideal characteristics for police officers in terms of important personality

traits, behaviors, and values. Chapter Four focuses on participants' answers to whether they trust police, why or why not, and what police could do to increase trust.

Participants also discuss whether they have personal relationships with any law enforcement officers and the nature of those relationships. Each chapter ends with a set of policy recommendations tailored to the chapter's themes. The concluding Chapter Five connects and clarifies key findings and recommendations.

We know that public safety matters, and that police-community relations matter, if not from the academic literature, then from having borne witness (again) to the perils of ignoring those truths. These young men, despite their complexity, their dynamic views, and their diversity agree on much, offering areas in need of immediate attention and policy intervention preferences that are entirely feasible.

Taken as a whole, the dissertation is intended to serve as a guidebook for law enforcement agencies and municipal leaders that carries forward the interests and policy ideas of those most impacted, and leads to agencies that are not reformed, but rather transformed.

2. Chapter Two: How Police are Judged

I just don't like [police]. I don't like how they killed my friend, [b]ecause they thought he had a gun in his hand. And he ain't have no gun in his hand...They just harass me sometime, even though I don't be out here doing nothing bad...That's what they do now, I guess because the area around here, because there's people getting shot every day—shootouts and stuff. That's the only time they'll stop us. They feel like you've got something to do with one...Sometimes, I be like, "Fuck the police," but the other part of that be like, "Don't say that because I got people that I know that work for the police department, and they treat me more differently than the others. So, sometimes, I'm like, "Man, I'm wrong for saying that." I shouldn't say that. I should think about what I say.

Dion, 24

The refrain “F--- tha Police,” popularized by hip hop group N.W.A. in its 1988 album *Straight Outta Compton*, is widely believed to represent the views of young, Black men—particularly those in marginalized communities. Researchers are wont to use more subdued phrasing: these men are said to be “negatively disposed” (Carr, Napolitano, & Keating, 2007).

It is striking that hardly any participant believes all police officers are bad, despite their long list of grievances. Over the course of their interviews, only Otis, 20, and Nathan, 30, report they have not had a negative experience nor witnessed one. Most participants report more than one negative experience and certainly more negative experiences than positive experiences. Justin, 27; Anthony, 22; and Sean, 20, report no positive experiences. At least 29% of participants share a story in which an officer pointed a gun at them, 43% say they have been injured by an officer, and 38% say they

had a relationship with someone who was killed by a police officer in Durham or another jurisdiction.

Chapter Two will bear out three key points that contribute much-needed depth to this perception of young Black men's views of police as intensely negative. First, there exist a variety of viewpoints among just the 21 young Black men in this interview cohort, depending upon how they were raised, their experiences with safety or danger, and their firsthand and vicarious interactions with police. Second, individual participants hold complex views of officers, some of which have changed with age and experience. Finally, participants do not believe that what they want from police is difficult to understand, radical, or unreasonable. They are clear-eyed about status quo inertia but characterize their desires as simple—ones anyone would naturally want (especially if in their shoes), and probably the kind of policing White people already get.

This chapter begins with findings from two questions to gauge participants' general orientation towards police, revealing an array of views from positive to negative assessments. Not only do interview excerpts display breadth of perspectives but depth, best showcased by the examples of mixed assessments. This context provides a helpful backdrop for the remainder of the chapter in which participants discuss criteria they use to determine whether police are achieving their mission to protect and serve. Because

participants believe their desires are simple and natural, their priorities for change are likely to resonate as largely intuitive and straightforward.

2.1 Participants' General Orientation Toward Police

I asked two “feelings” questions to draw an impression of each participant’s general orientation toward police officers. I categorize the interviews into Positive Assessment, Negative Assessment, and Mixed Assessment based on their answers to the following:

1. What are your feelings now about police?¹⁰
2. As you’ve gotten older, have any of your feelings about police changed with time, or have they stayed the same?¹¹

Answers that contain only affirming statements about officers or positive feelings towards them are labeled “positive assessments.” Answers with only negative emotions regarding officers or unfavorable characterizations are labeled “negative assessments.” There are two key findings. The first is that a strong majority of participants (76%) offer neither positive nor negative assessments but mixed assessments. The second is that views can be dynamic, improving or worsening over time. Because a relative few offer

¹⁰ Question 7 on the interview protocol.

¹¹ Question 29 on the interview protocol.

positive and negative assessments, I provide these examples first before focusing on mixed assessments.

Only one participant gives a positive assessment, proactively offering during the interview that two immediate family members are police officers, which he states has biased his outlook. Four participants give negative assessments. Both the positive and negative assessments are stable over time. See Table 2., which contains slightly abridged quotes responding to the two questions, indicated as QA and QB. Corroborating quotes from other portions of the interview sit in the right-adjacent cell. Note that some quotes contain sensitive language to ensure authenticity of participants' words and sentiments.

Table 2: General Orientation Toward Police Officers

Answers to Feelings Questions	Corroborating Statements in Other Portions of the Interview
Positive: Joseph, 20	
<p>QA: My feelings about the police are, I would definitely say better than others. I've been in situations where I've interacted with police around my friends, and I've had to be the one to say, "Okay, this is what you really should have said in this moment." Or, I've kind of had to...do all the talking, or be the leader of the group, just because I feel it's my responsibility based on my experiences as a kid,...the way I was raised and...taught. [P]olice officers often times don't even get a chance to prove themselves. They automatically get labeled or stereotyped or generalized. I would never judge a police officer unless they act a certain way.</p> <p>QB: My perception towards police has been instilled in me at a very young age. Just almost kind of gotten deeper as I've gotten older because I've gotten to a place where I understand more.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [My parents] always taught me how to deal with police, and exactly how to conduct yourself and what to say. I guess my parents always thought about police being ... here to protect us, you know? I guess that was instilled into me at a young age, so it kind of shaped my perspective moving forward. • I can't really think of any way to make police officers be perceived in a fair way in a community, or in my community in particular. I just think that people are so stuck in their ways that, to a certain extent, the police officer will always be viewed in a certain type of perception that's not necessarily the fairest.

Negative: Justin, 27	
<p>QA. Mmm, I don't really like the police like that. They killed one of my friends, or two of my friends. My first friend they killed, I was 14 [and he was] about 17, 18. My second friend they killed, I was 25 [and he was] in his late 30s...They always harass me 'cause of the neighborhood I grew up in, the friends I hung around. They look at me different. Always harass me and stuff—like, used to follow me around. Always searching me. Locking me up. Catching me with drugs when they search me, locking me up for no reason. I'd just be walking and they'd stop to hop out, harass me, hold me down on the ground, handcuff me, beat me.</p> <p>QB. Stayed the same.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [A]ll they do is just park somewhere and just sit in their car, or just ride around, sitting on a computer. • [They should] be in the neighborhood more, like walk around instead of being in their car. Try to get the criminals off the street.
Negative: Ellis, 24	
<p>QA. I don't mess with them. I don't deal wit' 'em." QB. "They stay the same. I mean, they won't change until somethin' change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I just avoid them,...because they can mess with you for nothing. • I just don't really like them. • They play games. • You never know when they actually helping you or when they against you.
Negative: Anthony, 22	
<p>QA. "Fuck the police." QB. "Nah. It used to be just like, "Fuck the police." But now, I say, "Fuck jail... 'Cause, they got a job to do, too. At the end of the day. But, just make sure you do your job, that's it. None of the unnecessary on-call shit. Or goddamn, and everyday you ain't got to go above and beyond."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The police in Durham is fucked up, man. They are. They're fucked up to the fullest. • Them motherfuckers don't do shit. But they feel like motherfuckers owe them, though. You owe them respect. You owe them goddamn kindness, politeness, goddamn manners. But they don't want to do shit. You want me to call you officer, but you call me "boy." You don't even say "man." You call me "boy." I would never call you officer...Officers say "boy" still. Them White officers in Durham...Racism's real.
Negative: Kevin, 21	
<p>QA. I don't like police...I hate when they show up. I really don't like anybody with a badge, whatsoever. I done seen too much with police. I done seen them beat the shit out of people. You get the ones that'll tell you to do one thing, and get you in trouble with another, because they don't want to say what they told you to do. No. Like no, when somebody higher come over there, and they want to act like they didn't tell you to do that. Now, you're trying to make it seem like I'm in the wrong. (continued) But, when I'm following the rules, you still trying to make it seem like I'm breaking the rules.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • And they basically snatched her out the car and was being rough with her. I'm like, "Yo, that's my mother!" for one... 'cause he started yelling at me 'cause I definitely got out of the car, like, "Bro, you're pushing my mama around, you already got her in cuffs, and you being all arrogant? Like, we're right around the corner from the job." If it wasn't for the simple fact that my mother's friend pulled up, we both probably would have went down that day.

<p>(continued) I don't like that, 'cause they always switching up the words, or always leaving something out...No, I do not like police.</p> <p>QB. They stayed the same. Because it's basically to the point, I feel like police really don't exist. It was just another bunch of people that get together just to act like they're protecting, but really doing the exact opposite. I feel like we gotta be our own police, that's it. They don't like when we take situation into our own hands, but at the same time, when we call you, what you doin'?</p>	<p>(continued) We really both would've went down. That day was ugly. That day was ugly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your actions basically taking it like we automatically a threat. Nine times 10, we're trying to get back home to our kids. We're just trying to get through the day. Now, if I go out, or something like that and 12 stops me, I'm either worried about "Will I get shot?" "Am I going to make it home?"
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The positive assessment reveals a great deal of trust in police officers—both in their actions, as reasonable and appropriate decisions that serve the greater good, and in their intentions to do good. Joseph’s trust was established at a young age and only reinforced by multiple positive interactions thereafter with on-duty and off-duty officers. He acknowledges one negative experience when recounting his interactions. But, he dismisses this experience as an individual officer, leaving his favorable assessment of the collective intact.

Deep distrust marks negative assessments. Participants attribute their distrust to various sources: unjust taking of life, lazy enforcement effort while serious crime rages about, harassment, verbal and physical abuse, and rapid devolvement of encounters into deadly situations. Fear of being harmed and/or humiliated fuels anger, resentment, and avoidance.

Seventy-six percent (16 of 21 participants) hold a mixed assessment of police. The mixed assessments contain ambivalent language in which negative and positive

emotions or characterizations of officers are present. For instance, participants might explicitly note the existence of “good officers” alongside concerns about the danger officers may present or their perceived failings to protect the community from violence.

In contrast to the negative and positive assessments, mixed assessments are much more likely to show change over time. Three burnished assessments dull over time as participants become increasingly concerned about the risk of officer violence or witness it. Four participants report an improvement in their outlook as multiple positive experiences with officers caused them to update their prior beliefs. Below are five examples of participants with a mixed assessment orientation. While Marcus’s mixed assessment remains stable, Tommy and Malcolm’s take a dark turn, and both Malachi and Dion’s outlooks brighten.

Marcus, 25, offers a window into his vulnerability with both a stinging critique and grace towards officers, but his point is that they are both human beings:

QA: I wish police would treat people like human beings. Treat us like you don't wear that badge all day... Don't just be looking at me, like, because I'm Black and I got dreads, you just assume I'm a criminal, and I'm just out here being a menace to society. I'm just an average Black man. Like, I'm a human being, just like you, you know? You shouldn't have no right to feel threatened by me. I should have no right to feel threatened by you... you got some cops who really want to make a difference, but cops that are out here to make a difference aren't noticed. They don't get notoriety for being good cops and actually being out here to make a difference. There's so many cops out here that's corrupt with power. They lose theyselves and forget who they are, where they come from. QB. They've stayed the same, I still don't fuck with police. I go my way, they go theirs. Occasionally, I may

run into a few officers that's cool and they'll speak, and I'll speak back. It's okay to have a conversation with an officer to an extent.

Tommy, 27, is a college-educated professional who, at one point had considered becoming an officer, but has come to think about his interactions with police in more grim terms in recent years. Though he uses politeness towards officers to improve his chances of a smooth interaction, his recognition of factors beyond his control has led him to take up a habit of praying every time he gets behind the wheel:

QA. I started praying more, like every time I get in the car. No accidents, tickets, no mechanical failures, so I keep it moving. I know I'm surrounded [by God's protection] as long as I believe ... I try not to think about it. When you think about it, things come to you, so I just don't think about it. I got pulled over actually last week. It was a female officer. She was polite. She just told me about my tags, 'cause I just bought the car, so I got little tags or whatever. I don't have this year's tag on it. That's all. She just told me about my tag, but she was polite. It was cool. I'll be polite to officers. I understand jobs where people already don't like you. If I come with mercy, they might come different. They might not come with anger. They might not come with attitude or whatever. They might not come with the guns up, so I just try to talk to them and just keep it friendly; keep it kosher. If that don't work and they just being an A-hole, then I don't know ... I'm just gonna keep my composure and just hope for the best.

QB. It's changed, 'cause when I was younger, I wouldn't think nothing about police. All I know is if I need them and was in trouble, I'd call the police. But through time as I got older, like to this day, yes. I'd say I've got more anger towards the police because of the police brutality and how they're getting off in cases. And when I say getting off in cases, I mean like how they're being just set free and not getting no jail time, or not getting the death sentence. And also, let me see. Just the way we've all been targeted. Just the way we are being targeted; it's just ridiculous. It's like you're hearing more and more stories in the news everyday about another police shooting a Black man. That's becoming an everyday thing, now. That's not only a Black man, but a Black person, period. Or, a Black person getting treated unfairly. It boils me. I ain't gonna lie. It do. I talk about it, but I try not to talk about it. I'll turn in to Malcolm X the next day.

Malachi, 23, relays his feelings and how they have changed over time:

QA. I try to stay off their radar. I had plenty of cases with police officers pointing guns at me. I don't like police officers. QB. When I was young, I never liked the police. We used to throw rocks at the police. Everybody used to hate the police. My uncles used to be like, "Stop telling on each other so goddamn much! What, you wanna be the police? Where's your badge?" Even as a kid when other kids would want the stickers and stuff they'd be giving out, I didn't trust them stickers. I thought they might have a tracker in them. I changed, because I've come across some good police officers.

Dion, 24, also experienced a softening in his stance toward police over the years.

This is the chapter's opening quote in full:

QA. I just don't like them. I don't like how they killed my friend, [b]ecause they thought he had a gun in his hand. And he ain't have no gun in his hand... That's what I don't like. It's the only reason. If it weren't for that ... the police be alright with me. Now, I've gotta say, I've walked down the sidewalk. They just harass me sometime, even though I don't be out here doing nothing bad. You've got some police officers, they'll just feel like "Oh, there's something going on with him. I'm gonna search him." That's what they do now, I guess because the area around here, because there's people getting shot every day — shootouts and stuff. That's the only time they'll stop us. They feel like you've got something to do with one. QB. A little bit. Sometimes, I be like, "Fuck the police," but the other part of that be like, "Don't say that because I got people that I know that work for the police department, and they treat me more differently than the others. So, sometimes, I'm like, "Man, I'm wrong for saying that." I shouldn't say that. I should think about what I say.

Finally, there is Malcolm, 22, among the most sympathetic toward police. His first experience with police at five years old cemented his view of them in largely positive terms when they rescued him and his mother from a violent boyfriend, right after he had doused them with gasoline and just before he lit the match. Nevertheless,

despite his cherished childhood memories receiving stickers from neighborhood officers, even he cannot avoid anxiety in his rare encounters, as he explains:

QA. I would say cordial but uneasy. I haven't had many encounters with the police other than, you know, what I told you. If I were to get pulled over, if I were to show my license, my registration and everything like that—yes, they are the authority—but, I shouldn't have to feel like, if I get this question wrong, I don't know what's going to happen. You know, am I gonna go here? If I have to take my seatbelt off, if he asks me to get out of the car. I'm not scared for my life or anything, but I just feel like there should be much better policing in certain neighborhoods. Of course, if there was someone and they had drugs on them, or they know they're doing something wrong, then being in a police officer's shoes, I would feel the same way as far as feeling uneasy. So, there's tension between both sides. But, you shouldn't have to feel that way every single time, because police protect and serve. They're here to help the community. It should be more like programs or something for them to be in the community instead of them just coming when there's a shooting or domestic dispute. QB. They've changed, but not too dramatically. The only reason being, if I get pulled over, [my unease is] an automatic feeling. And, now that I have a son, there's just even more precaution, you know. I want to see him go to college and get married. That's really important. And, when he gets of age to get his car, hopefully things calm down by then. But, he'd probably feel the same way.

What is striking about these accounts is the fear that undergirds them all. What these mixed assessments highlight most acutely is that it is not a question of whether police are all bad or all good, or even mostly bad or mostly good. What infuses each encounter with anxiety is the uncertainty each new officer presents. “Which kind of officer will I get this time?” “Will something simple go off the rails?” The inability to rely on a service that claims to protect and serve is something that troubles the participants. Certainly, poor treatment sours views. Yet, positive encounters can leave a mark, years and sometimes decades later, which is why assessments are dynamic.

Altogether, this notion of risk—of certainty and uncertainty—manifests in all three assessments. Joseph’s positive assessment reveals a high degree of certainty police will protect and serve in any given situation. The distrust apparent in Justin, Ellis, Anthony, and Kevin’s unfavorable ratings, reveal their assessment that interaction with police officers carries a high risk of harm. Or, put another way, their certainty of officers as a high-risk pool lessens their willingness to engage with any one particular officer. In the mixed assessment, we see evidence that Marcus, Tommy, Malachi, Dion, and Malcolm struggle with a high level of uncertainty as to the level of risk each officer carries. Thus, they believe there is a good chance an officer will decide to protect and serve, but there is too high a chance the officer will not—which results in anxiety and ambivalence during engagement.

2.2 Participants’ Assessment Criteria for Policing

The participants’ nuanced and dynamic feelings and assessments motivated their answers for how the Durham Police Department can improve. Results come from participants’ answers to three separate interview questions all related to assessing police:

1. How could police increase your confidence in their ability to do a good job?
(Confidence)¹²

¹² Question 31 on the interview protocol.

2. How do you judge whether police are doing a good job? What would police have to do in order to get an “A” in your book? (Get an A)¹³
3. If you had a magic wand and could make a perfect interaction happen between an officer and a civilian, what would you do? You can choose any scenario. (Magic Wand)¹⁴

For ease of reference, I have included abbreviations in parentheses. Most answers overlap; however, there are slight (and sometimes not-so-subtle) distinctions when participants use magic.

Participants’ answers to the three questions contained 148 distinct comments, 91% of which fit under six substantive themes. Table 3. shows the top five themes based on either their share of total comments or share of participants who subscribed this preference.¹⁵ Comment representation rankings show number of comments for each

¹³ Question 20 on the interview protocol.

¹⁴ Question 30 on the interview protocol.

¹⁵ There were two additional categories not listed here. The “Miscellaneous” category comprised nearly 9% of total comments, with the bulk of them saying there was nothing officers could do to increase their confidence or earn an A. However, the majority were able to eventually think of an answer when pressed. Other answers under Miscellaneous, were about demonstrating confidence and firmness, getting guns off of the street, having competent back-up, and one person expressed already having total confidence in police. The other category, which comprised 6% of comments, was called “Save or Help Civilian from Consequence.” This answer was unique to the magic wand question, because several participants used magic to rescue a stranger from a negative police action, have the officer

theme out of 148 total comments (displayed as numerator). Case representation rankings show the percentage of participants out of 21 who discussed the theme. Theme findings will follow the order of Comment Representation: “Stop Harming & Threatening Us” and “Be Part of the Community” both tied for number one with 33 comments each, “Protect Us from Criminal Threats” in second place, “Mediate & Problem-Solve” coming in third, and “Do What’s Right” in fourth place.

Table 3: Criteria Assessment Theme Rank by Comments and Case

RANK	BY COMMENTS REPRESENTATION (Out of 148)	
1	"Stop Harming & Threatening Us"	33
1	"Be Part of the Community" (Relationship-Building)	33
2	"Protect Us from Criminal Threats"	23
3	"Mediate & Problem-Solve"	18
4	"Do What's Right" (Expectations of Lawfulness & Fairness)	13
RANK	BY CASE REPRESENTATION (Out of 21)	
1	"Be Part of the Community" (Relationship-Building)	81%
2	"Stop Harming & Threatening Us"	71%
3	"Do What's Right" (Expectations of Lawfulness & Fairness)	62%
3	"Mediate & Problem-Solve"	62%
4	"Protect Us from Criminal Threats"	52%

extend grace or compassion, or wish that the officer and civilian never met in the first place.

2.2.1 Theme Rank #1 (Tied): Stop Harming & Threatening Us

The theme “Stop Harming & Threatening Us,” is largely driven by demands for officers to stop or minimize deadly force, which participants express are natural consequences of their other top concerns under this category: widespread harassment, an excessively aggressive approach, and bias against Black people. In addition to race, participants attribute bias against them or their peers to hair style, dress, tattoos and earrings, their neighborhood, and the make and model of their vehicle. Given the number of times so many participants had experienced officers approaching them with hands on their guns unprovoked in their estimation, and the number of times officers had pointed guns at them unnecessarily, participants identify those habits as creating conditions that increase the risk of shootings across the board.

Answering the question, “How could police increase your confidence in their ability to do a good job?” Nathan, 30, and Travis, 24, respectively, provide two examples in which desires to eliminate racial bias and minimize deadly force are both represented:

Minimizing the use of deadly force and, as a minority, making sure that I know that I'm having the same rights as a non-minority.

Neither does Travis mince words:

They could stop shooting Black men for one. And, I just think that race should not be an issue when it comes to police officers. The law should see no color.

Comments from both Carlos, 30, and Tommy, 27, exemplify the common wish to turn back the clock and rescue other civilians from death and brutality. Carlos shares how he would use his magic wand:

I would re-start all those scenes where guys are wrongly harassed or attacked or brutalized. Hit the re-set button. A lot of those people still deserve to be here.

Though he does not invoke his concern about racial bias in this particular answer, Tommy responds similarly in how he would wield magic, starting (as most participants do) with a soft and surprised chuckle at the offer before grasping the wand's weight:

I would rewind back all the people that got shot, and I'd have them do it different. I'd have them put them in handcuffs instead and just understand them. I'd just rewind everyone back; bring everybody's life back. Just do it different. Like the guy who was selling CDs out of his trunk, I'd have the officer to rewind it back, have him talk to the man first, instead of just putting him in a chokehold. The guy who was selling loose squares outside the store, I'd reverse all that back, all them guys back and have the police do it different...in a positive way. That's what the magic wand would do...Going back to the policies. I'd have them do it the right way in the book. Instead of coming out with your gun, I'd have them, "Excuse me, sir. You know you can't sell CDs. This says 'no soliciting' or whatever outside the store." Just have them do it different; reverse it. Do it the right way. Instead of the guy who got shot in the back for running, instead of the gun, get a Taser. Just do it different.

These concerns about excessive force, bias, and the potential for deadly force combined with officer unpredictability make each encounter fraught. That unpredictability or unreliability among officers was what underlay so much of the anxiety and their posture towards officers.

2.2.2 Theme Rank #1 (Tied): Be Part of the Community

“Be Part of the Community” includes calls for officers to be courteous and try harder to show they care about the community. While some participants use their magic wands to effect more ambitious outcomes, Derek, 22, and Malik, 28, respectively use magic to guarantee themselves a polite, albeit routine exchange:

I don't know, just a routine traffic stop. Ask me how I'm doing. Tell me what is the reason why you pulled me over. Ask me for my license and registration. I guess, go back to the car, run that and see if I had any warrants or any outstanding, unpaid parking tickets. If not, just give me back my information and tell me to have a good day.

Malik also finds great appeal in a straight-forward and mannerly arrest, standing in sharp contrast to his previous experiences with officers:

I mean, honestly, a calm interaction is all I need. I don't need all that aggressive and all that: “You fitna go away from here,” or just talking trash. Like a regular old, calm, put you in cuffs. “You all right? Cuffs ain't too tight, are they?” Just a simple, simple, calm interaction to me is all right. Because I had a whole bunch of them, they had to talk trash on the way down [to the police station] or while we were there.

This theme also calls on officers to become more invested and involved in the community through events and more positive exchanges with young people. Jay, 31, advocates a dramatic scaling up of such events when asked what police could do to increase his confidence in them:

Do more things in the community, like they do the National Night Out thing. They do it one time a year, come to the neighborhoods, all of the hoods and stuff. But why? There's 12 months in a year. Just 'cause you come out one day and everything is cool on that one day ... Y'all coulda kept that. There's 365 days in a year. You

feel? Y'all coming out here one day. So, (claps to emphasize his point) we're supposed to kudos for that? No. Hell nah! Y'all still the same sorry ass police that you was yesterday.

Anthony, 22, also endorses increased involvement in response to how police could earn an A:

Being in the community. Looking out, taking a part in the community. You know what I'm saying, like [instead of] pestering motherfuckers' parents, why not, goddamn, be out there talking and spending time with the kids, making sure the kids good? Make sure they're straight, they had good days at school? Instead of trying to give their parents a hard time or, goddamn, base them or judge them off they parents?

Several stress the importance of officers getting out of their cars as a first step to removing literal and figurative barriers, with other participants insisting officers can do more to build relationships and guide people, especially youth. Here is how Elijah, 27, answers the Get an A question:

Get an A. I would say you got to, my main thing is the younger people and the older people. I would say if they protect them, I'll give them an A. Yeah. The younger, the kids. Yeah. That's the ones that need it right now, you know? There's a whole generation coming right behind me, so they going to need guidance. Because right now it is some, but it's not enough.

Travis, 24, uses his magic wand to compel the officer not only to extend grace to a hypothetical kid shoplifting, but to guide them in a positive direction:

Mmm! I like seeing young kids... say a young kid was to shoplift or something like that. Instead of a police officer sending them to jail, I would like to see a police officer drop some gems on them, you know what I mean? Instead of just punishing them out the gate, give them a chance, but show them the way...give them guidance. Not on no scared straight stuff, but just: "You're better than this," or "This leads to this" type of thing. Or, even if they were like, "This is what I could do to you right now, but this is what I am going to do for you."

There is a caveat. In other parts of the interview, Otis, 20; Ellis, 24; Sean, 20; and Nathan, 30 share their belief officers should only respond when called, adopting a minimalist approach they had observed in more White neighborhoods. They view stationary officer presence in Black neighborhoods as harassment and articulate a desire for police to “stay out of the way.”

At the cohort’s extreme, Anthony, 22, and Marcus, 25, idealize a world in which street justice reigns and there are almost no police or courts—except to imprison those they describe as kidnappers, child molesters, and serial killers for whom they believe exposure to like-minded individuals is an appropriate punishment. Knowing such a world will never come to pass and accepting that there will almost certainly be some police presence and court system, they both offer spirited and specific advice about how officers should comport themselves when answering these assessment criteria questions.

So too, do Otis, Ellis, and Sean suggest ways for officers to be a part of the community once given a magic wand. Otis, wants officers to be able to know people’s names and strike up spontaneous conversations asking about school or work, Ellis has police officers first counsel and guide people instead of ticketing or arresting them for weed (still making notes in the computer for follow-up), and Sean seeks to create bonds of friendship between police and community members (though he struggles to imagine

specific activities they could enjoy together). Only Nathan does not make comments that fit here.

One might see these views as conflicting or even contradictory, but they reflect these participants' range of desirable scenarios depending upon agency and officer behavior. For Marcus and Anthony, street justice is preferred when it is viewed to be more competent or accurate than state-sponsored justice, when the state fails to lock up the correct people or locks up the wrong people too often and for too long. If officers harass people, then a preferred alternative would be for them to only come when called. But, with magic to guarantee a perfect scenario, then their desired alternative is for officers to be constructive and add value to people's lives.

2.2.3 Theme Rank #2: Protect Us from Criminal Threats

Under the third theme, "Protect Us from Criminal Threats," top answers are to catch real criminals; solve crime; and stop, lower, or prevent crime. While those who have been involved in criminal activity lament how dangerous Durham is, participants across the board share deep concerns over how indiscriminate offenders can be when pursuing a rival. Of the eight who have been shot, half were unintended targets caught in crossfire or mistaken for someone else, having no tie to or knowledge of the shooter. Others have experienced near misses with bullets whizzing past them as they dove for

cover in the midst of mundane tasks like waiting for the bus to come. Malachi, 23, vents his frustration at police for not catching real criminals in his Get an A answer:

Lowering the shootings. Out here catching these mass murderers. Actually doing good police work, not just going off of what people tell them.

Malcolm, 22, emphasizes the importance of solving crime on the same question:

When or if you don't see repeat offenders constantly. It shows that they've done a good job of investigating. Stuff doesn't keep happening.

Jay, 31, leads with stopping crime:

...Stopping crimes, murders, and stuff. And keeping peace. Not, damn, pulling up, harassing people for no reason, and no ... That's not what you're supposed to do, that's not what you're here for. That's not what taxpayers pay your salary for.

Finally, Jordan, 24, pauses and sighs with exasperation at knowing what he wants to say, but also with weariness from how distant a goal it seems from his current reality:

I can't say goddamn "Stop the killing." I mean, that's the only thing I can think of. I can't say goddamn, like, just stop the killing. Stop niggas from dyin' and [stop] shootin' us.

Grief, encouragement, and weariness accompany indignation at the crime situation in their neighborhoods. Their feedback for what would improve safety spans critiques of patrolling strategies, reallocation of resources, positive reinforcement for the situations that do result in de-escalation, disappointment about poor service delivery in light of the expectations of citizenship, and a reminder of the policing mission's core objectives.

Despite strongly enforced norms most participants acknowledged that discourage “snitching,” many also believe police could and should place more muscular effort into detective work to find and arrest serious offenders. Surprisingly, over two-thirds of participants (15 of 21) say they would call police and/or answer questions regarding a crime depending on the situation, and go on to detail the conditions under which they would do so.

One participant hedges. Kevin, 21, says he can’t see himself calling police at the moment but is unwilling to rule it out as a possibility down the road, noting, “There may be an appointed time when I really have to make that call.” Another five say they would never call or cooperate with police (preferring to handle things on their own) but would either call or have someone else call for an ambulance if someone were hurt. Jay, 31, is a strong proponent of this camp. But, when men shocked and infuriated him by shooting up his grandmother’s house in pursuit of his cousin who does not even live there and, instead, (non-fatally) shot his uncle while sitting on the porch, his work-around was to give the police (whom a family member had called to the house) names and descriptions of the assailants and warn the police they had better find them before he did—which he said they did in short order. Aside from Jay, seven have either called police to a scene for their help or cooperated partially or fully as a witness. Only Justin, 27, was completely uncooperative with the investigation in his own attempted murder,

despite Durham's persistent efforts, fearing he would be finished off with orders given from prison.

2.2.4 Theme Rank #3: Mediate & Problem-Solve

The Mediate and Problem-Solve theme involves notions of officers as peacemakers through constructive intervention in conflict, de-escalation of tension, ensuring everyone has a chance to voice their perspective, trying to understand where people are coming from, and helping parties arrive at a satisfactory resolution. This category also includes comments about officers going above and beyond expectations and displaying a service-oriented mindset.

The idea of an officer bringing calm appealed to several. In Jordan's, 24, magic wand scenario, the officer resolves a hypothetical altercation at Starbucks:

You go to Starbucks and it's a altercation where customers are yelling at an employee because something's wrong with their coffee...And they didn't get it right. And the customer's being over loud and over aggressive, and the police walk up to him. He talks to him, he calms him down, and he buys his coffee for him. And, he just brings the situation down instead of forcing it, instead of using force, just using his words and body language and let that person know, "Yeah, I'm police. You need to just chill. I can help you; help me.

Malcolm, 24, assesses officers based in part on their ability to bring calm, saying:

Also, being able to diffuse a situation without excessive force. Anything that doesn't result in someone losing their life. That's the best job you can do.

Several participants express their desire for officers to try to get an understanding of people. Ellis, 24, is deeply skeptical that police could increase his

confidence, given how “many minds” would have to change. But, he identifies increased understanding as key, saying, “...I guess not too much killing, having a better understanding.” Malik, 28, also shares serious misgivings about what he sees as too many police officers failing to understand people:

It just seem like they got sickly minds. “I’m going to go get me somebody.” They don’t understand why some people are out there selling drugs or committing crimes. People I grew up with, dealt with, we didn’t have much, and once you start having kids and you got to feed them and all this, you got to make some money somehow.

Some participants use their magic wands to elicit more understanding from officers. In one of the farthest-reaching uses of the wand, Kevin, 21, decides to “go back to the time when we were still basically fighting to be free.” Here’s how he describes the purpose of transporting the officer to the era of American chattel slavery:

Just being able to see, to be able to understand, because we are basically not equal. So, let me show you, like, we’re no different.

The last examples focus on participants’ judgment that officers should be able to handle or resolve situations. In response to what police could do to increase confidence, Joseph, 20, stresses the importance of “handling the small things well,” elaborating:

I think that you gotta do your best with the small things, and the things that are not as difficult to handle, and hope that that builds some rapport, so when something really does happen that has some real severity, then those smaller encounters will then hold a little more weight and influence the way someone thinks about the officer when something severe happens.

Anthony, 22, answers similarly on how he judges whether police are doing a good job:

When I see cops doing shit...that's above and beyond their job, they really honestly ain't got to do. Handling and doing things that I do.

Rather than heroic acts of courage in the face of grave danger, participants detail a vision of policing that does the steady, quiet work of prevention. Participants see officers as leaders empowered to create spaces of peace and understanding both between themselves and the public, and among members of the public.

2.2.5 Theme Rank #4: Do What's Right

The final theme, "Do What's Right," outlines expectations of lawfulness and fairness. Participants expect officers to follow the law and policies, and to carry out principles of fairness as part of their basic duties. Many participants acknowledge officers have a job to do and want them to "just do their job" — "no more and no less." Finally, calls for officers to hold each other accountable are included in this category as well as stated desires for officers to have good character.

Participants mention fairness at various points throughout the interview, including among their rationales for determining how officers could earn an A. Nathan, 30, says officers could "be fair across the board," and Travis, 24, invokes the Golden

Rule, stating, "Treat people fairly in all circumstances. Like, treat me how you would want to be treated...if I was a police officer, and you were just a civilian."

Given virtually all participants believe the purpose of police is and should be to protect and serve, they readily acknowledge police play an important role in society but wanted them to demonstrate restraint. Doing too much or being too exuberant is viewed as an enthusiasm to hunt or catch people; not doing enough is seen as failure to protect them. Jay, 31, characterizes this sweet spot in participants' assessment: "They're just supposed to do their job." Jonathan, 23, also exemplifies this when asked about how officers can increase confidence:

To increase, just do their job. That's all I can really ask from the police. Don't harass, do your job...Just...I don't know. That's it.

Tommy, 27, responds similarly on the get an A question: "Just do they job."

Tommy's generously explicated line of logic shows how doing more than necessary can reveal a motivation for becoming officers as one to hunt or target certain people:

Just do they job. Live by the policy. You know what I'm saying? Go by the policies that they have for them. Just do the right thing. Have good character. I mean, that's really it. Ask them, "Why are you a police?" Ask them, "Why are you here?" "What's your purpose?" 'Cause some just getting into it just to target certain crowds. Yeah, you just gotta ask them why they're here.

Malachi, 23, similarly concludes that police would have to "do their job" get an A from him. Let us return to his aforementioned call from Theme #2 for officers to protect the community from criminal threats. Malachi's use of the phrase "doing their job" in the

extended quote below differs from Tommy's. While Tommy wants officers to reign themselves in to only do their jobs, Malachi sees officers as falling short of doing their jobs by not stepping up to the plate to ensure the community's safety:

Doing their job. Lowering the shootings. Out here catching these mass murderers. Actually doing good police work, not just going off of what people tell them. [When they do a good job] it's because they're controlling the neighborhood. Be out there! They leave, then niggas get turnt up. Then, after someone dies, then y'all wanna be out, patrolling the whole block. You see two of 'em out walking. If y'all would have been out there, nobody would have died. Some people will do it right in front of the police and still get away with it. I've seen it.

Participants clearly viewed officers as having a job to do and wanted them to do it. Their statements conveyed their concerns that overdoing their job and underperforming in their job have led and could lead to public harm.

2.2.6 Discussion of Themes – Interpretation of Results

The "Stop Harming & Threatening Us" theme looms large in participants' minds because of their firsthand experiences and those they have witnessed, as well as identifying with Black men hurt or killed by police in the media. In a survey question at the end of interview, 19 of 21 responded that they "related" to African Americans shown in the media killed by police officers, selecting "a little," "a lot," or—the most common answer at 13—"that could easily be me." Participants' concerns about officer bias and proactive aggression, constantly refreshed by unceasing media stories, means participants largely consider each interaction to be fraught—each interaction potentially

inflicting a corrosive effect on confidence in police and causing damage to the relationship.

Though some sub-categories driving the “Be Part of the Community” theme sound basic, such as expectations of courtesy and officers putting greater effort into their work, their importance should not be underestimated. Consistent with procedural justice, participants value respectful dialogue precisely because it so easy to do in their eyes and because they feel such treatment is their right as a human being. It is easy to read participants’ desires for more foot patrols and increased engagement as a desire for community policing. Certainly, some participants reflect fondly on instances when they received stickers from officers as children or when they have observed officers playing basketball and video games with other children. However, their preferences go far beyond what the Durham Police Department (and likely most any other department) has historically carried out. Several participants call for a systematic approach to officers becoming more embedded in the community for the purposes of truly serving it and caring for it as stewards (a theme that will return in Chapter Four). They simply do not believe it is possible to protect a community without becoming personally invested—particularly invested in its children.

Under the theme of “Protect Us from Criminal Threats,” the call for police effectiveness could not be more piercing. That so many feel they, their loved ones, or

their communities are under siege is evident in their exasperation that police too often respond in an untimely manner or after-the-fact, wrongly allocate resources to enforcing petty violations that constitute harassment, and, worst of all, threaten their lives instead of save them. Several participants echo Malcolm's desire for police to solve cases, viewing it as a core component of police work.

The theme "Mediate and Problem-Solve" offers a portrait of officers engaged in the quotidian work of peacekeeping between families, neighbors, friends, strangers. In place of high-speed chases and rappelling from buildings to successfully conclude hostage situations, participants conjure the successful routine interactions they crave. They are also acutely aware of officers' ability to use their discretion, something they would like to be used to solve problems rather than exacerbate them.

The final theme, "Do What's Right," outlines expectations of lawfulness and fairness. As the vast majority of participants believe there should be police, and that police should protect and serve, participants want officers to strike a balance. Overenthusiastic law enforcers that lead participants to feel like they are targets elicit as much concern as nonchalant law enforcers that leave participants feeling like targets to criminals. Participants value officers with a sensibility of fairness, seeing these officers as the most likely to "just do their jobs."

2.3. Policy Recommendations

The following policy recommendations, which will be indicated by “R,” are logical extensions of participants’ stated desires. In some cases, participants made direct suggestions as to what the policy should be, and in others, I intuit a policy that could feasibly lead to participants’ desired outcomes. This intuition is based on my years of knowledge and experience as a bureaucrat in local government monitoring police and sheriff internal affairs investigations as well as observing local and national trainings for law enforcement officers on a variety of topics. As a former policy advisor to state legislators pursuing police reform efforts, I have also read broadly about police reforms. A key point is that participants’ ideas are not particularly radical, and are consistent with many current and past reform efforts.

2.3.1. Stop Harming & Threatening Us

In terms of the racial bias so many participants highlight, several describe their interactions not as ones in which implicit bias was likely operating, but ones in which explicit bias was operating. Descriptions specify hostility, name-calling, racial epithets, and other sexualized vile language. Participants make similar assertions in addressing racial animus as they do for addressing aggression and excessive force—that the department should improve its screening of applicants for relevant personality traits and behaviors, that training should include much more realistic scenarios that force

officers to work through their fear (until they overcome it), and that other officers are key to correcting poor officer behavior in the moment and holding them accountable afterward.

Finally, many participants believe there is no accountability for officers' decisions to shoot. Perceptions are reinforced by examples they share of departmental insensitivity, such as allowing officers involved in shootings to continue working on that same beat or allowing/encouraging officers to disband peaceful vigils.

R1. Conduct deeper background investigations, psychological testing, and other screening of applicants to weed out those with unresolved anger issues, machismo, and racial bias.

R2. Expand and deepen academy and continuing education offerings that promote calm approaches, communication, and de-escalation training. Enhance trainings so that they more closely simulate the field, in order to elicit and help officers reduce and manage fear.

R3. Establish stronger departmental norms for officers to be courteous and humane, and provide training to officers that helps them intervene when their colleagues overstep professional (or legal) boundaries.

R4. Clarify and limit behaviors regarding touching, unholstering, and pointing weapons through policy and subsequent training. Mandate officers file reports for unholstering and pointing their weapons, and implement an automatic review by the supervisor. There should be an audit process in which an official higher than the officer's supervisor or outside of the chain of command reviews body camera footage of the incident (Clemmons, 2020).¹⁶

¹⁶ The other policy recommendations closely reflected or were original based solely on these interviews. In the case of this recommendation to reduce weapon-pointing, no

R5. Ensure independent investigators in cases of officer-involved shootings. But, at the very least, re-assign the officer to a different area regardless of “guilt,” and do not obstruct community members’ efforts to hold a vigil.

2.3.2. Be Part of the Community

Participants view officers as underutilized in their capacity to act as moral authorities and positive role models. They call for a radical increase in opportunities for officers to become invested and—indeed—embedded in the community so that police can “actually” protect and serve. In their view, these increased opportunities for interaction are/should be reserved for non-enforcement activities, such as getting to know people and the community, assisting with community betterment projects, holding fun and educational gatherings with adults and children, and developing sustained positive relationships with children and teenagers through play and activity.

R6. All officers assigned to patrol this police district should spend one shift per week fulfilling a community service need in accordance with the officer’s passion and/or skillset. A coordinator would liaise between officers, community organizations, and community members to arrange the match.

participant offered a specific idea for a policy. However, they expressed great displeasure at the capriciousness with which officers seemed to wield their discretion.

2.3.3. Protect Us from Criminal Threats

Participants share one notable frustration with current crime-fighting efforts. In the instances in which participants had called or spoken with police and shared what they knew about a crime that had been committed against them, all report they never received any follow-up communication regarding their case. Furthermore, they suspect nothing had been done, because of what they perceive as lackluster officer effort during the initial meeting, incredulity on the officer's part that the participant did not have more information (assuming they were withholding), or because the participant assumes the officer would have called if they had found the culprit. Even in one case in which the participant was shot, he learned his assailant's identity through a relative who found the person because he had been bragging. The relative later learned he had been arrested. However, due to the lack of officer communication, the participant was not sure if the person was arrested for shooting him or for some other crime.

Police should avoid generalizations regarding snitching. It is true that some participants concede they would never give police information or only give partial information in serious cases, even if or when investigators aggressively sought it, this philosophy is far from universal, as discussed previously. Again, most participants either share instances in which they had cooperated fully or express when they would do so.

R7. Pursue investigative leads vigorously, regardless of whether detectives suspect stakeholders will cooperate (since they cannot know a priori who will and won't).

R8. Fully explain the investigative process in the initial conversation with a stakeholder and then follow through with new information.

2.3.4. Mediate & Problem-Solve

In their desire for officers to use their discretion wisely in order to solve problems, to calm parties down, and to seek and create understanding, participants discuss these preferred behaviors as ones they have either witnessed or experienced and know officers to be capable of. They believe that some officers are naturally disposed to such behaviors but also that they are a conscious choice subject to training and value-setting by the department.

R9. Provide advanced communication training that strengthens skills in active listening, mediation, and decision-making. Whereas the de-escalation and communication training under the "Stop Harming & Threatening Us" theme, is designed to help officers manage their own fear, the goal of this communication training is to equip officers to serve as effective interveners who can influence others.

R10. Hire more selectively, prioritizing candidates with a record of critical thinking, problem-solving, and customer service.

2.3.5. Do What's Right

As enforcers of the law, participants expect officers to follow policies, laws, and protocol. They expect officers not to behave as if they were "above the law," and they

want officers and the department to hold other officers accountable. Moreover, they see effective law enforcement as crucial to maintaining order and protecting society, wanting officers weeded out who refuse to fulfill their duties and wanting officers removed who view community members as enemy combatants. Here are the final recommendations for this chapter:

R11. Regularly and impartially audit body cam footage to ensure officers are behaving lawfully as a matter of course.

R12. Impose stronger disciplinary penalties, including termination, for violating policies, violating the law, and for abusing civilians' rights.

2.4. Conclusion

This chapter begins with an overview of participants' general orientation toward police. Using responses to two questions about participants' feelings and whether they have changed over time or remained the same, I categorize participants' assessments of police as positive, negative, and mixed, evidencing the breadth of this cohort's viewpoints.

I also show how nuanced these men's views are. Mixed assessments best showcase how men make sense of positive and negative data and use it to make decisions. While positive, negative, and mixed assessments raise the notion of risk assessment, the mixed assessment category most vividly displays how participants

grapple with uncertainty in their engagement with officers, especially when they have been previously exposed to a vast array of officer behavior.

This context is useful in situating participants' largely intuitive responses to how they assess agencies. Twin concerns for participants are for officers to stop threatening and harming them and to become a part of the community, followed by stopping criminal threats, mediating and problem-solving, and doing what is right as a matter of course. Participants then offer a bevy of policy recommendations by which agencies can minimize the unpredictability that plagues their relationship—hiring policies that select better officers, standard-setting that clarifies departmental values and aims, training that prepares officers to succeed consistently in meeting expectations, and accountability that ensures quality control in service delivery.

3. Chapter Three: The Ideal Behavioral Profile of a Police Officer

Value-wise, you would think [police would have] some decent values. They probably got values when they go home. But you don't get to switch your values on and off. You treat people how you want to be treated. They don't treat people the way they want to be treated. Simple stuff. Stuff our grandparents taught us, or our parents or uncles. It's so simple. This ain't back in the cowboy days when you shoot a person for stealing a cow or a horse or something. You already coming out in your mind you want it to be—you want something to happen. You would think their values would be top notch.

Malik, 28

In Chapter Three, we gain an understanding of participants' vision of an ideal police officer. What kind of personality traits, important behaviors and habits, as well as values or morals do participants believe are necessary for being a successful police officer? What do they see as crucial to accomplishing the brand of policing they detail in other parts of the interview? That is, what kind of officers would be needed to carry out the policing that participants envision?

As in Chapter Two, participants' varied and complex views take center stage, as does their insistence that their needs and wants are timeless and fundamental.

Participants suffer from officer unpredictability on two fronts, wide variation in the suitability of some officers for their role as well as arbitrary decision-making. However, rather than shying away from officer discretion, they lean into it but demand officers who are sufficiently just, professional, invested, composed, and discerning enough to

use discretion wisely and communicate effectively. They demand officers who wield discretion and aggression judiciously to balance the community's safety with its freedom—police who honor the principle that protecting people's safety does not necessarily require their sacrificing rights and liberties.

3.1 Participants' Ideal Officer Traits, Behaviors, & Values

This chapter's findings combine the answers to three interview questions:

1. Are there any personality traits you think are especially useful for officers to have where you live? Like what? (Traits)¹⁷
2. What behaviors do you think are important for officers? (Behaviors)¹⁸
3. Are there any values, morals, ethics, or standards you think are important for officers to have? (Morals)¹⁹

In parentheses are shorthand that will sometimes be used later in referencing the question. Participants express 185 comments that I categorize into substantive themes.

Table 4 on the next page, labeled "Ideal Officer Behavioral Profile Theme Rank by Comments and Case," list all six themes ranked two ways. The first is a ranking based on share of total comments (185). Here, themes for officers are that they should be (1) Just at 26% of the total, (2) Dedicated Professionals at 19%, (3) Communicative at 18%,

¹⁷ Question 21 on the interview protocol.

¹⁸ Question 22 on the interview protocol.

¹⁹ Question 23 on the interview protocol.

(4) Invested at 14%, and—tied at 12% each—(5) Composed and also (5) Discerning & Adaptive.

Located just under the share of total comments ranking in Table 4, is the rank listing by share of participants who subscribe to this theme (out of 21 total cases).

Rankings here also position Just officers in the number one slot with 86% of participants discussing this theme. Tied for second place are Communicative officers alongside Discerning & Adaptive with 67% of cases. Tied for third place with 62% of cases each are Dedicated Professional and Invested. Ranked in fifth place is Composed with 57% of participants making a statement under this theme.

Table 4: Ideal Officer Behavior Profile Theme Rank by Comments and Case

RANK	BY COMMENTS REPRESENTATION		RANK	BY CASE REPRESENTATION	
1	Just	26%	1	Just	86%
2	Dedicated Professional	19%	2	Communicative	67%
3	Communicative	18%	2	Discerning & Adaptive	67%
4	Invested	14%	3	Dedicated Professional	62%
5	Composed	12%	3	Invested	62%
5	Discerning & Adaptive	12%	4	Composed	57%

For the next sections, interview quotes and analysis from all six themes follow the order of Comment Representation in Table 4. Participants want officers who are (1) just, (2) dedicated professionals, (3) communicative, (4) invested, (5) composed, and (6) discerning and adaptive in their decision-making. In participants' selection of a

workforce, they choose officers who have a strong moral compass, a passion for service, the ability to relate to all kinds of people, who care about the community, are self-possessed in their approach, and who respond appropriately in their interactions. Though one might read these qualities and wonder who wouldn't agree with these, participants frequently point out that their desires are "common sense" and "basic" and note that they demand these qualities because they believe officers had too often lacked them in their interactions.

3.1.1 Theme Rank #1: Just

Three subcategories comprise this theme: officers who are upright, fair and unbiased, and lawful and transparent.

Upright: As powerful authority figures, participants seem to be more concerned with officers embodying the spirit, rather than simply adhering to the letter, of the law. Good character reigns among participants' ideal characteristic as the most mentioned, full stop. There are two components to uprightness. First, participants desire officers who are "good" and "honest." They place a premium on truthfulness, whereas dishonesty (or perceived dishonesty) in officers elicits intense negative reactions. For Joseph, 20, integrity is integral to officers' decision-making when he responds to what values, morals, ethics, or standards are important for officers to have:

I also feel like integrity, like I said before. Just because the police officer has so much power in certain situations where he can make a decision where it wouldn't even be noticed by anyone else, but it would have such a huge impact on the person that the decision's being made [on], you know? Just that in those certain type of situations, the decision is ultimately leaning on the officer's own integrity and his own morals, and his own viewpoint or perspective. So, with that said, I think that integrity is huge for a police officer...And, definitely honesty as well.

Jay, 31, agrees wholeheartedly: "Honesty! Honesty. That's pretty much it.

Honesty," he responds when asked about important personality traits. He reiterates this

when answering the morals questions, calling honesty, "The one that counts." Otis, 20,

strikes the same chord, answering "Honesty" in his response to the traits question.

Malik discusses crime he committed and tragedy with a close friend, which prompted

him to change course. He also expresses frustration when reflecting on high-stakes

situations in which he alleges police lied to him or about him, especially in court

proceedings:

Honestly speaking, a lot of the times I've been interacting with them, they lied! They lied about a lot of stuff, like how stuff happened. And, I got a lot of motional discoveries. And, I'm like, "That didn't happen that way. Why would they say that?...They gotta make theyself look good. They're not going to write on paper something when they messed up. It's just, being trustworthy is a value a lot of them that I interacted with didn't have...You know that didn't happen that way, but yet you wrote it, because it makes your case look better.

In the second component to uprightness, participants call for officers to "lead by

example," sometimes even invoking the Golden Rule in their responses. Participants

refer to officers being a good example to their fellow officers as well as community

members. Perceptions of hypocrisy produce strong negative reactions, similar to the

effect of officer dishonesty. Replying to the behavior question, Otis, 20, answers: “Just leading by example and trying to be a leader in the community.” Sean, 20, concurs:

...Lead by example. Manners. I just feel like people look up to cops. They look at cops, so I feel like cops should just lead by example, like really. I feel like being a cop is like being a Christian; you can't really be seen doing anything. You have to be on point with everything.

Jonathan, 23, agrees that officers must be cognizant of how community members see them, also using Christianity as an analogy:

It's just like this: if you go to church, you can't say, 'I'm saved' and you're not actually at least trying to help somebody else get saved. I think they don't mix. You being saved, that's a change in life. You should actually want to help somebody else get on the same path that you're on...You have to have that self-respect before you can dish it out to others. You have to actually care about yourself before you can care about others.

Jordan, 24, points to officers as role models:

And, I feel like you being a police officer, people 'posed to look up to you anyway. You feel me? They 'posed to be *all* that. That's how people really look at them. Like, you are a man and a badge, and that means something.

Finally, several participants tout the usefulness of officers living by the Golden Rule. Answering the morals question, Otis, 20, responds, “Morals. Just treat people the way that you would want to be treated.” If the Golden Rule seems a bit quaint, that assessment is not lost on participants. At various points in the interview, many explicitly deem their desires to be “simple” and, as mentioned previously, “common sense,” as we see from Malik, 28, in this chapter's epigraph.

The Golden Rule sentiment is part of a larger belief participants hold that police officers are human beings first. Their desires and advice for officers are about officers behaving the way *any* person or any professional should, i.e., without a badge. Moreover, they want officers to remember their shared humanity, believing many officers would behave differently if they took the participants' perspective.

Here is Kevin, 21, offering his version of the Golden Rule on the morals question, highlighting common humanity:

...I would say look at the badge. Treat it as if you didn't have it, like how it was if you didn't have it in the first place, like if you were in our shoes getting pulled over. Think about it like that, how you'd want them to approach you. I know you can't fit the size of my shoes and everything like that, but you got your own path to walk, but at the same time, if you would walk in my world, just think about it like that.

Shared humanity also infuses Carlos's, 30, artful version of the Golden Rule:

...we're people, just like the people you're trying to get back home to. We're also that to somebody as well.

Fair & Unbiased: Participants share scores of accounts in which officers' decisions caused great financial stress through tickets or confiscation of property, injured them physically, took away their freedom, or hurt them psychologically by causing pain to their family members—particularly using excessive force on their sisters, mothers, or grandmothers. Several participants discuss wanting officers to be “fair,” which they define as wanting officers to treat everyone equally.

Otis, 20, characterizes “fair” as when officers “try and do right by people,” while Travis, Derek, and Joseph use the literal word, “fair.” Participants also discuss wanting officers to refrain from automatically ascribing negative intent, even when they have a criminal record. At various stages of the interview, several participants discuss how unnerving it is to be judged for something they had done previously and not allowed an opportunity to start anew—especially if the incident had happened years prior. Kevin, 21, talks about a time when an officer’s treatment toward him changed upon running his ID and reading his record:

I've even had a officer approach me and be like, "Man, you crazy." I said, "The hell you talking about?" They be like, "I didn't think you was, got darn, I didn't think you was gon' have all that on you." I said, "Bruh, if you don't speak plain English to me. What are you talking about?" Before you ask them for help about something else, they're talking about your record. I be like, "For real?" You just basically looking at my record and then looking at me? Like, nahhh. Sometimes, they'll really pull your record before they come approach you and be like... Or, when they ask you for your ID and then go look your name up. Now, when they come back, they approach towards you is different because of what they see on that little screen or whatever that pop up. And, it's like, Bruh, naw, just 'cause of what that was, doesn't mean that's what I am, now. Shit.

Participants cite racial bias as a major source of unfairness. In his response to the morals question, Nathan, 30, answers:

Like I said before, treating everyone equal. I just feel like in general, minorities don't get treated as well by police as non-minorities.

Jordan, 24, agrees after stating officers shouldn't be trigger happy:

And just because somebody look a certain way, don't just...react off their color, their race.

Answering the morals question, Derek, 22, concludes:

I think it goes without saying, obviously, you can't be racist if you're a police officer...To be protecting people of a different race and they don't care for their race.

Lawful and Transparent: The final subcategory under the Just theme emphasizes a strong preference for officers to conduct constitutional and orderly processes.

Participants speak openly about their rights of citizenship and expectations those rights will be upheld, becoming agitated when they believe them to be violated. Both Elijah, 27, and Travis, 24, want officers to presume civilians are "innocent until proven guilty."

Dion, 24, disapprovingly recounts his mish-mash experiences with law enforcement:

Some of them read you your rights right off the bat, but some of them don't. They just put you in handcuffs and then want to read them to you afterwards...Some of them don't even tell you your rights; they just put your ass in handcuffs and throw you in the back of the car. You got some that be like that. You ain't got nobody else there to say, "He ain't tell him his rights." So, they can't go off of your word. They're going to believe the police before they believe you anyway. No witnesses around, so you're just basically fucked.

Participants also articulate a desire for clean cops and clean processes. Malcolm, 22, wants officers to "focus on good policy." Travis, 24, wants to ensure officers are not "crooked" and, instead, are operating "within the lines of the law, because there's boundaries to it." Derek, 22, sums up the group's sentiment:

Everything they do needs to be held to the highest standard. They're the law. They keep everyone in order.

This theme made two things clear: one, officers should grasp the difference between right and wrong; and, two, they should do their best to be on the side of right. While the U.S. Supreme Court has allowed officers some latitude to use deception in interrogations (Frazier v. Cupp, 1969) or to give pretextual reasons to stop drivers or pedestrians (Whren v. United States, 1996), the visceral reactions participants have to deceptive officers, suggests the short-term victory of nabbing a suspect likely does not outweigh the long-term cost of lost faith and trust in law enforcement. A failure of officers to conduct themselves with integrity or treat people in ways they would not dare without the authority of a badge, appears to do a level of damage that is underappreciated.

3.1.2 Theme Rank #2: Dedicated Professional

The Dedicated Professional theme places great emphasis on craftsmanship. Here, officers are expected to be positive, passionate for service, perseverant, and protective.

Positive: The call for officers to bring positive attitudes to work allowing them to engage in a friendly and polite manner is the second most mentioned subcategory among all themes (after good character). Nathan, 30, answers, “Be friendly, be courteous,” in relation to important traits. As if to put a fine point on it, his answer to the next question about important behaviors leads with “Friendliness.” Derek, 22, states officers “should be the most friendly.” Like two sides of the same coin, Dion, 24, says, “Not pull up with bad

attitudes,” while Malcolm, 22, believes officers “should always have a good attitude. Also, block negativity.”

Passion: Several participants believe it is important for officers to have a passion for their work. Jordan, 24, begins: “Don’t be an asshole,” then commands, “And, if you love your job, love your job from the heart.” Jonathan, 23, pounds his fist on the table for emphasis:

...And dedication, too. Even dedication. I just feel like you got to be dedicated to do the same thing everyday. Mad, happy, sad, and tired. You should wake up wanting to at least help somebody do something.

Malcolm, 22, feels similarly:

...having the right mindset. Trying to figure out how to be a better officer...Coming to work and figuring out ways to be progressive. “What can I do differently?”

Derek, 22, speaks directly about passion, expecting officers “to be passionate about what you do,” and Nathan, 30, expounds on an important trait—“a customer service” orientation:

...generally go above and beyond to make sure that the customer is satisfied or comfortable and things like that. And, I felt like that’s something that I would like to see more in police. Just more of a “How can I make this situation better for you,” type thing.

Participants want officers to have a heart for helping people and a penchant for self-sacrifice. In response to the morals question, Travis, 24, specifies officers who “want

to help you rather than hurt you,” and Joseph, 20, states unequivocally, “I think above all, officers have to, number one...put their feelings last.”

Perseverant: The third driver of the Dedicated Professional theme centers on work ethic. Participants believe being an officer is difficult, and officers need to do their best in order to be successful. Comments in this subcategory include words like perseverance, effort, patience, and endurance. Tommy’s, 27, response to the morals question is, “They gotta have perseverance. Let me see. That’s it.” Travis, 24, puts it even more succinctly, “...obviously hard workers.” Sean, 20, says, “Energetic. That’s all I can think of.” Both Carlos, 30, and Derek, 22, agree officers need “patience.”

Protective: Several responses reveal a desire to feel reassurance. Sean, 20, who has been shot on two separate occasions, wants the relief of knowing officers are not working to protect certain individuals in the neighborhood and “letting [them] do stuff [they] shouldn’t be doing,” but instead serving everyone. Jordan, 24, states, “They’re supposed to feel safe. They’re supposed to feel like everything is okay with them.” Joseph’s, 20, answer stands in accord with Jordan’s sentiment:

I think that police officers almost have to have a—not necessarily nurturing aspect, but kind of like a—sense of safety about them. Because you should feel safe around police officers, you know? I don’t necessarily know how to put that in a word, but I think that you should definitely just feel safe around police officers.

This Dedicated Professional theme emerges because participants believe being an officer is difficult—plainly stating not everyone can or should be police officers. They

speaking freely about how much more selective departments should be in deciding who is qualified, training them well, and holding them to high standards commensurate with the weight and seriousness of the position. In participants' accounts, professionalism incorporates both competence and fairness in their demands for officers to exhibit perseverance and protect them as well as for officers to maintain positive attitudes.

3.1.3 Theme Rank #3: Communicative

Given participants' inclination to see officers as community mediators and problem-solvers (at least potentially), it is not surprising that interviewees state a strong preference for officers to be skilled communicators. Four robust subcategories drive this theme: officers being (1) sociable—generously exercising the gift of gab, (2) respectful and affording people dignity, (3) open-minded and not rushing to judgment, and (4) seeking to relate to people and understand them and their circumstances.

Sociable: This subcategory involves officers being a “people person” and socially adept, bringing people together, and even deploying humor...or at least being willing to share a laugh with a community member. Sometimes, participants literally use a form of the word “communicate.” Otis, 20; Elijah, 27; and Jonathan, 23 stress the importance of officers excelling in “communication skills,” but Carlos, 30, goes into detail:

There gotta be some line of communication. A dialogue has to start, has to commence. 'Cause if you don't got that, you don't really got anything. You just got officers that feel like they know what our best interests are and just know us,

but they don't. So, it gotta be some give and take as far as talking and communicating. And, if we can get that, I mean, a lot can happen. But, getting to that point is already a uphill battle in itself.

Along these same lines, Marcus, 25, wants officers who are a "good people person; a person who's good with people" in terms of traits, and those with "some good social skills" in terms of behavior. Tommy, 27, thinks "a sense of humor" is a helpful trait. Malachi, 23, recognizes officers are busy and "have a job to do," but appreciates officers with a "cool personality," giving an example of a time when he and an officer were "laughing and joking."

Respect and Dignity for Others: Consistent with their philosophy that officers should lead by example, many participants call upon officers to communicate respectfully and in a dignified manner. They argue doing so would earn officers respect or greater respect in return, whether from them or others in the community. Kevin, 21, declares the following:

Just, it takes respect to get respect. Just respect me. I mean, first of all, you can call me by my last name...Don't call me out my name. Don't call me whatever you think I am. Don't do that. At the same time, you want me to call you "Officer" such and such...You want me to say, "Yes, Sir," and all that, but you can't call me by at least my last name? You can't say, "Mr." or "Sir?" No, you talking out the side of your neck.

Dion, 24, feels similarly about reciprocity:

The way I see it, I respect the police as long as they respect me...You've got to give respect to earn respect, in order to get respect. Some of them think you're supposed to respect them just because they've got a badge on. You're still a person. Some of

them think you don't got feelings like they do. I respect the police. As long as they respect me, I don't got no problems with them.

After likening respectful behavior to "coming with some sense," Jonathan, 23, adds, "Dignity...I think the officer has to have dignity to dish out dignity, you feel me?"

Open-Minded: Participants make note of how officers encounter an enormous variety of people, in all states of mind. They believe the most constructive orientation for navigating this environment is being open-minded, neither judging individuals nor determining a methodological approach too hastily. As Jonathan, 23, observes:

You're a police officer. You have to interact with different types of people on different levels: high, drunk, sleepy, tired, anything.

First thing first, participants outline, is for the officer to ask questions and gather information through careful listening. Here is Carlos, 30 responding to the behaviors question:

Asking questions. Gathering information. Like I said, talking could cover a whole bunch of—like, communication--could solve so many problems. I mean, I'm not sayin' that's the end-all-be-all of what needs to be fixed, but a lot of things could be different if there wasn't just such a disconnect between police and citizens.

Travis, 24, says, "listen," and Kevin, 21, discusses the longer-term consequences of officers having a reputation of not listening, such that he and his peers eventually learned not to speak at all:

If you yelling, or doing A, B, all the way to Z, ain't nobody going to... No, take me downtown. No matter what I tell you off rip, if I say something to you, you're either fitna throw me to the ground or do whatever. I don't know what you're fitna do to me. Like, nah.

Jordan, 24, believes having an open mind will help prevent officers from boxing themselves into too few options or, frankly, the wrong ones. He names “labeling” as a behavior officers should avoid:

Going like labeling. I guess, like, going into somewhere with one mindset and not having other options. You feel me? Not always just thinking one way, or you're like, “We're fitna shoot him and shit,” instead of like, “Oh, what's going on to making them this get this way?” Just like have other options.

Relatable & Understanding: Understanding is another skill participants believe officers need to help community members solve problems and resolve conflicts.

Interviewees discuss the importance of officers seeking to understand situations through showing their own human side and relating to others as humans, to increase everyone’s level of comfort.

Participants do not assume that having a shared race or ethnicity suffices in granting an officer cultural knowledge. They are specific about officers understanding the localized culture of any place they have to police, preferably because they had grown up there, and if not, because they put in the time and work to learn it. Though a small act, Malachi, 23, recalls with appreciation, “I’ve only seen this once—a young, Black officer riding around listening to our music.” Anthony, 22, uses humor to convey his point about relatability as a valuable trait:

Personality that’s fit for that section of the neighborhood they get scheduled to work on patrol, I guess. Like, be able to handle, or be ready to react or respond, or be able to relate to where you’re working at...[a p]ersonality that kind of match

the goddamn scenery or the background you're going to be working in. Don't have no motherfucker that's lived in Beverly Hills be in charge of the [public housing complex name removed], man.

Anthony's end goal in wanting officers to be able to relate, is in wanting them to understand. Marcus, 25, relays his concerns about too many officers failing to understand people:

I think cops could be more understanding. I think they don't be understanding people when they be talking. They just be hearing it, and they just be making up their own story in they mind.

Joseph, 20, also wants officers to seek understanding, even when people are in the wrong. In his answer to important traits, he ties relatability to understanding:

Relatability, I think above all, just because I feel like relatability ultimately breeds trust, and also makes someone feel a lot more comfortable. If they feel like, even if they've done something wrong, that the police officer understands. So, really, relatability and understanding go hand in hand.

At times, participants express surprise, and at others, exasperation, at what they see as excessive proportions of officers who either "don't *know* how to talk to people" or "talk crazy" to them, precisely because they view communication as an essential and daily part of their jobs. Emotions range from puzzlement to anger as participants reflect on how it is possible that so many officers either do not have the social skills to interact or choose not to without consequence.

As such, participants deploy a variety of strategies, depending on their level of risk aversion (which several participants say has risen with age). Some decide to ignore

disrespectful behavior from officers when they encounter it and remain respectful, even when difficult. They attribute this strategy to how they were raised and/or not wanting to be penalized or physically harmed. Others, report adjusting their level of respect to the officer's level, neither yielding in tone, words, nor actions, up to and including the point of physically resisting, hitting an officer back after a sucker punch, or running away from the officer. Participants easily recall officers who are skilled communicators and believe this should be the standard, wanting them to be respectful, open-minded, and understanding toward those they serve.

3.1.4 Theme Rank #4: Invested

Participants envision officers as strong positive role models who care about the lives of those they are hired to protect—who believe their lives have worth and cheer on their success. Presumably, it is this brand of officer who would be embedded in the community envisaged in Chapter Two. Three subcategories drive this theme of officer investment in them and the communities in which they work. They want officers who are (1) compassionate and kind, (2) caring, and (3) community-oriented.

Compassionate & Kind: Sometimes, participants speak affirmatively about kindness or compassion, such as Derek, 22, who says, “Officers should be the kindest people”; or Derek and Travis, 24, who says officers should have “compassion” and “be compassionate,” respectively; or Anthony, 22, who says the following:

Well, yeah, more of...I guess sympathetic. Some people want more sympathy from them. Some people do. 'Cause like I said, they act like they don't care.

Others frame these concepts in the negative—identifying a behavior that is the opposite of what is desired and discussing its deficiency. For example, Malik, 28, laments officers who are lacking in compassion and empathy due to being self-righteous and unforgiving:

...You the type that'll wanna lock a person up for everything, because you lived your life so righteous that you can't do no wrong. So, it ain't no reason for nobody to be doing no wrong out here, so lock them up. I've had officers let me go on some things [like] "Man, go ahead and get up out of here, man," but you got the officers with the personality of being unforgiving.

Caring: In this subcategory, participants might literally use a form of the word "care," or they might describe the act of caring, such as officers tending to their needs or demonstrating they have a heart (as opposed to behaving like a robot). Here, again, participants use both affirmatively and negatively framed language to convey their desires.

Tommy, 27, speaks in the affirmative, "They gotta care, first. They gotta care." Jonathan, 23, also states plainly, "You have to actually care about yourself before you can care about others." Travis, 24, offers, "I feel like they should be attentive."

In an example of negative language, here is Marcus, 25, clarifying what he means by saying he does not want officers to be "an asshole" or "nonchalant":

Have you ever been in a situation with a cop and you're talking to him and he's just looking like he just don't give a fuck?...Pretty much like that, just being real nonchalant. Fuck it, I don't care. At the back of his head, he's probably like, "I'm going to take you to jail anyway."

Community-Oriented: This subcategory gives us the best window into the significance participants place on officers being invested. They want officers to be compassionate and kind and caring, because lives are on the line. When Malachi, 23, is asked the morals question, he answers: "I want them to start thinking about Black Lives Matter." Anthony, 22, could not place the stakes any higher in his insistence that officers should "match" the neighborhoods they patrol, when he lays out the costs of failing to do so:

He obviously ain't gon' give a fuck,...but somebody that's from the [public housing complex name removed]—that's made it to [becoming] a officer and that's patrolling the [same complex]—man, he wanna see them kids live. He wants to see these kids not accidentally get shot. He want to see that child that's up there that's dunking, that's six feet only in goddamn 6th grade, 7th grade, dunking. Go see him go to the NBA, you feel me? He want to see kids like that make it. He want see motherfuckers that's actually working and trying to get out of the station they're on, get better jobs and do better. He wants to see them get better and do better and receive better, you feel me? Don't put a motherfucker there that don't give a fuck, man. Because they don't give a fuck.

Marcus, 25, believes officers should value the respect, friendship, and cooperation community members do give, rather than taking those things, and their jobs, for granted. He says, if they value them "as much as they should, they wouldn't be out here acting and doing the things they're doing." Participants offer a few ideas about how officers can show the community they care. Malcolm, 22, says even a small gesture,

like just asking “a question or two,” aside from standard, “How are you?” could “make a person’s day.” He also encourages officers “giving advice, if possible.” The idea of officers advising youth appeals to Otis, 20, as well. He says:

Set a example, talking to young kids in the neighborhood, and just trying to explain to them how to, you know, go about things the right way.

Justin, 27, ratchets up the idea of guiding youth to full-on peace-building:

Some of them might, like, come into the neighborhood, talk to the kids, try to get gang members together and stuff like that.

Participants want officers who are compassionate and kind, caring, and community-oriented, because that is the kind of person they believe is capable of serving and protecting them, their family members, friends, and neighbors. They want officers who recognize the myriad challenges their communities face and ally with them to navigate and overcome obstacles. They believe traits like compassion will also inoculate officers from their inclinations to over-react when people are in the wrong and make people’s already precarious situations worse. Participants don’t just tell the police department what not to do; they command the department on what to do, urging them in no uncertain terms to be invested.

3.1.5 Theme Rank #5 (Tied): Composed

As the vast majority of participants express concerns about officers threatening and causing harm, it is not surprising so many place vital importance on officers’ ability

to manage their emotions. Participants identify three components to composure: (1) officers managing their own fear, and (2) managing their own aggression, so they can (3) be clear-headed and calm in their interactions.

Managers of their Own Fear: Participants raise concerns about officers being fearful in various parts of the interview. A few mention this in their response to the ideal officer profile questions, because they see danger as inherently part of the job and, therefore, courage as requisite. Tommy, 27, says, “Some of them just be scared. They gotta have confidence.” Jordan, 24, says, “Courage. You gotta have courage to wake up every day and do what you gotta do.” Derek, 22, says people should have enough self-awareness to self-select out of the job if they are going to approach the job fearfully. He says officers have to have more courage than the average person, not less:

I guess, knowing what's for you. Like I said, if you at any point feel like you're going to fear for your life as a police officer, the person that we call, when we fear for our lives, we call y'all to come and protect us from the bad guys. And y'all show up and tell us that *y'all* are afraid of the bad guys?! It's like, why did we call you? We need to call someone else.

Participants believe some fear is understandable—indeed, anyone would be afraid of certain things—but officers are called to overcome it in order to restore safety. Participants also believe that officers, at times, act on misplaced fear, which they believe can lead to an over-reaction that is too aggressive.

Managers of their Own Aggression: Participants call on officers to halt their overly aggressive behaviors, which they believe undermines their mission. Here is Malik, 28, showing how officer aggression can spark volatility:

But it's just they automatically come to you. They come to you so aggressive, and you can't talk to no aggressive person. Only way you going to talk to a aggressive person is being aggressive yourself.

In this subcategory, participants identify three sources of aggression. One is fear, as seen in Jordan's, 24, directive, "Don't be so trigger happy." Another source is anger, an emotion that can also lead to lethal consequences. Here's Marcus, 25, commenting on important behaviors:

Composure, holding their composure. Not too many cops try to hold their anger. I think that's just something it should take to be a cop. I think all cops should have anger management assessments. The cop can get angry and yeah, forget all his morals, and boom.

More often, however, participants discuss aggression in its less lethal, more common form. They attribute this lower level, though still harmful and disturbing aggression, to officers taking out their personal problems on innocent people, such as Derek, 22:

I don't know if this would even be a behavior, but it's just not letting personal issues interfere with your professional career or professional issues. I know that's very — that's hard to do sometimes. It's very easy for that to happen with anybody, but the occupation and the position as a whole, y'all most definitely cannot let that stuff interfere or let that mix at all.

Like Jonathan, 23, who laments officers with an inability to “be professional without bringing your life into it” and tells officers having a bad day with their spouse or kid not to “bring that into the field,” Dion, 24, also expresses concern and introduces another painful consequence—unnecessary incarceration:

Not pulling up with bad attitudes, because you got some that will pull up. They already be having bad days, and then they’ll take it out on you, and then you’ll say something back to them, and they’ll be ready to lock you up.

Several participants complain about having witnessed or experienced aggression and stress the importance of officers learning to set and maintain healthy boundaries between work and home life. They want officers to be able to self-regulate in order to consistently achieve cool-headedness.

Clear & Calm: This subcategory expresses a collective desire for officers to be and bring calm. Anthony, 22, wants officers “just to be calm.” Carlos, 30, believes they should have “poise,” and Sean, 20, replies, “I feel like they all should be cool and laid back.” Jordan, 24, picks up where Sean leaves off, urging, “Don’t let a lot of shit get to you. Be cool-minded, cool-headed.” Finally, Malcolm, 22, sympathizes with officers but agrees that self-regulation is necessary for maintaining public safety:

Coming to work with a clear space. I could imagine how hard it is to block out things from before—like seeing someone shot—but it could go more smoothly with a clear head. Having an open mind, not to be as tense...Just like I shouldn’t go to my job and take things out on people, they should be the same.

Their desire for officers to be self-possessed stems from a believe that officers must compose themselves prior to arriving to the scene so they do not pose a safety risk, maintain composure when provoked, and by the power of their example invite others to gather their composure as well. Participants see the latter two decisions to exercise and model composure, as key to officers restoring peace and order.

3.1.6 Theme Rank #5 (Tied): Discerning & Adaptive

Participants counterweight their eagerness for officers showing empathy and care, with their will for officers to not be taken advantage of or outmatched. Thus, they stress the importance of officers having the good sense to know what a situation calls for and the wherewithal to rise to the occasion. Here, participants want officers whose smarts and critical thinking allow them to (1) know, (2) *know what matters* to accurately detect threats by discarding unimportant information, (3) *know when* to be stern or dial up their assertiveness, and (4) *know how to balance* the flexibility and care participants desire with firmness.

Thinkers Who Know: Under this subcategory, participants relay wanting officers to be smart and think critically, using both raw intelligence and hard-earned knowledge to see situations for what they are and respond appropriately. Tommy, 27; Travis, 24; and Nathan, 30 say, respectively, that officers “gotta think,” “should be critical thinkers,” and should be “quick thinkers as well.” Derek, 22, says he wants

officers “to be smart,” and Jordan, 24, says it with gusto, “Like, he’s smart, he’s all that.”

Ellis, 24, stresses the importance of officers taking the time to think before acting:

...sometimes, they can come to a scene and think they know what’s going on, and not really have a good understanding. I think they should be a little more understand[ing]...Before jumping the gun.

Know What Matters: Participants believe that part and parcel of being a good cop is keenly assessing a situation to separate the important from the unimportant—knowing the difference between what the community considers to be petty versus a priority—and responding in kind. Malachi, 23, mentions officers who “don’t mess with petty stuff,” while Malik, 28, expresses irritation with officers who “don’t know how to let something small go.”

Elijah, 27, identifies a useful trait, “I’d say vision. Yeah, you got to have vision...They just got to be aware...you got to have that eye for it.” Marcus, 25, also ties vision to awareness and focusing on what matters in his critique of the police work in his community:

...you been up here all day, ain’t nothing going on, but what the fuck are you doing up here? No crime is being committed. What you sitting up here in this store for? Because really it looks like you’re trying to make a problem out of nothing because you’re sitting up here at the store, where okay, you know, stuff goes down. But what are you sitting up here for all day? You sitting up here at this store is going to make somebody get shot down there at the other store ‘cause while you’re sitting up here, everything you think you gonna be waiting for and stopping is going on somewhere else. Because while you’re watching them, everybody watching you, so now they know you up here. Where you think they’re going? They’re gonna go somewhere else. Now that person you thought was about to get shot in front of you is about to get shot down the street, and you don’t even know

it, because you too busy watching stuff that don't matter. You trying to catch somebody selling drugs and you missed the person that just got his head shot off.

Cultural competence also plays into knowing what matters, as several participants extol the benefits of officers knowing people, places, and norms in their community. They also advocate for such knowledge to be required as part of the process of hiring officers and/or assigning them to patrol areas. Elijah, 27, explains how cultural competence improves the police force:

Say if you grow up in a neighborhood. A guy that knows the city, knows the different gangs here in certain neighborhoods...You know a lot of people... If you hire somebody that grew up in that city, they'll know. They have experiences from there, you know? They've been through it. They know the areas. They know what people think or what people going through...so it be better to hire people that been in that city or in certain communities for a while.

Malachi, 23, explains how cultural competence helps officers discern important details that might seem small to an outsider. He gives an example of an officer who understands the sensitive nature of snitching and the precarious position they might put Malachi in if he were perceived by bystanders to have initiated the conversation. Malachi wants an officer to have enough awareness, that even in a light, friendly conversation, the officer would be shrewd enough to avoid endangering him, explaining: "He talking to me, but makes it clear he's talking to me—not me talking to him."

Know When to Be What: Several participants speak to the importance of officers' having an internal gauge that signals to them *when* to turn up to a mode commensurate with the threat or circumstance. Malik, 28, finds it disconcerting when officers "treat the victim like the criminal," noting "the approach is everything." At the same time, he permits some leeway when the time comes: "Be aggressive when you need to be aggressive." Anthony, 22, agrees. He immediately follows his permission for officers to dial up their aggression with an unmistakable call for them to be caring when that behavior is also called for. The operative word here is "when" in his response on important officer behaviors.

You got a gun, know how to turn up *when* you need to. And, just to be calm, have a heart. Sometimes you got to have a heart. (Emphasis mine.)

Participants do not extend this permission cavalierly. They openly acknowledge how difficult it is to have an accurate sense of timing, like Jay, 31 when asked what behaviors are important:

I can't really say about behaviors, because every situation is different, you know? But, it just depends on the situation, what's called for at the moment.

Jay returns to his line of thinking a little later when talking about departmental change:

Things ain't easy. Sometimes, it's needed and other times, it's not. But, they should be able to recognize the times where they need to be a tough cop, or whether they need to be a concerned, generous cop, you know? They need to be able to differentiate.

Know How to Balance: This subcategory is marked by juxtaposition of preferences. Participants verbalize the tension they feel between two desires, and say either “I want this *and* this,” or “I want this *and not* that.” This stems from an empathy for, or partial identification with, the officer in wanting the officer to be respected, but also wanting the community to get what it needs and deserves. Participants believe officers must master a balancing act in order to be successful. Answering the important behaviors question, Nathan, 30, says, “Friendliness, but I do feel like there has to be a level of firmness and, you know, toughness as well.” Malik, 28, also invokes firmness, saying, “They have to show that they’re firm. But, they have to also, like, show that they ain’t all bad.” Sean puts it even more efficiently in his response to the traits question, “Stern yet flexible.” Joseph, 20, similarly juxtaposes fairness with sternness, though he externalizes his reasoning:

When I envision a police officer I would want to interact with, I would want them to be fair, but at the same time I want them to kind of not be a pushover, you know? I think people will almost push a police officer just to see how much they can get away with, which then makes a police officer have to kind of act in a position of discipline or authority just to make you understand: “Yeah, you’re not gonna push me over,” you know?

Participants view officers’ ability to discern as crucial to being effective crime fighters. They respect officers who are intelligent and want them to use their intelligence in what they see as the right way instead of the wrong way. In terms of the right way, they want officers to think critically, working hard to acquire relevant knowledge and

apply it logically and in a timely fashion. They believe this will equip officers to know how to protect the community and themselves.

In various parts of the interview, several participants complain about officers they believe do not exercise intelligence or use it the wrong way. This ranges from failing to know their environment and or taking time to learn it, to failing to use logic or reason to make decisions. Moreover, participants express frustration with officers who underestimate their intelligence, which leads to two problems in their estimation: one, these officers wrongly believe they can fail to apply intellectual rigor unnoticed, and two, these officers wrongly believe that poorly reasoned explanations, efforts, decisions, or actions will satisfy participants. The phrasing, “They think we’re stupid,” best represents participants’ processing of these kinds of exchanges.

There are three particular kinds of knowing participants see as necessary for identifying and rooting out “real criminals,” or those participants agree are causing real harm and should be priorities for the department. They want officers to know what matters, sifting and interpreting data correctly to avoid false positives. They want officers to know when to behave in a manner befitting the situation—fine-tuning their timing gauges like any craftsman would, to get better and sharper with experience. Finally, they want officers to know how to balance what’s required, fully aware that the values brought to bear on a situation may be in tension with one another.

3.2 Discussion

I find a great deal of consistency between the criteria participants use to assess agencies from Chapter Two and the criteria they use to assess officers. Before discussing each ideal officer theme, let us quickly refresh on the top five themes for how participants assess agencies, as seen in Table 3 from Chapter Two.

Repost of Table 3. Assessment Criteria Theme Rank by Comment

RANK	BY COMMENTS REPRESENTATION (Out of 148)	
1	"Stop Harming & Threatening Us"	33
1	"Be Part of the Community" (Relationship-Building)	33
2	"Protect Us from Criminal Threats"	23
3	"Mediate & Problem-Solve"	18
4	"Do What's Right" (Expectations of Lawfulness & Fairness)	13
RANK	BY CASE REPRESENTATION (Out of 21)	
1	"Be Part of the Community" (Relationship-Building)	81%
2	"Stop Harming & Threatening Us"	71%
3	"Do What's Right" (Expectations of Lawfulness & Fairness)	62%
3	"Mediate & Problem-Solve"	62%
4	"Protect Us from Criminal Threats"	52%

Of paramount concern to participants is wanting officers to cease threatening their lives or well-being through their words or actions, alongside wanting officers to be part of the community. Participants believe officer integration in the community would make them more effective in preventing criminal threats. Next, they believe officers are capable of—and should continue—problem-solving and mediating disputes. Many participants share instances in which officers excelled, thus helping both parties involved. They also

report examples of when officers fell short on what they see as an important and unique contribution to public safety, by electing to forgo opportunities to mediate and problem-solve. Finally, participants feel strongly officers should be fair and act lawfully, given their supreme power and discretion. I will discuss each ideal officer behavioral profile theme, identify the assessment criteria theme to which it is most tightly connected, and then explain the relationship between the two themes. Below, Table 5. depicts the pairings and their alignments.

Table 5: Mapping Assessment Criteria onto Behavioral Profile

Just	Do What's Right	Communicative	Mediate & Problem-Solve	Invested	Be Part of Community
Upright -Good Character -Lead By Example	Have Good Character	Sociable	Resolve/ Handle Situations	Compassionate & Kind	Be Courteous
Fair & Unbiased	Be Fair	Respectful	Defuse Situations	Caring	Show You Care
Lawful & Transparent	Follow Law/ Policy	Open-Minded	Get Everyone's Side of the Story	Community-Oriented	Guide People
	Do Their Job	Relatable & Understanding	Try to Understand People		Get Involved
Composed	Stop Harming & Threatening	Discerning & Adaptive	Protect Us from Crim. Threats	Dedicated Professionals	Combination
Managers of Their Fear	Stop Bias	Smart/ Quick Thinking	Catch Real Criminals	Positive	Be Part of Community
Mgrs of Their Aggression	Stop Over-Aggression	Know What Matters	Solve Crime	Passionate	Be Part of Community
Clear & Calm	Stop Harassing	Knowing When	Stop, Lower, Prevent Crime	Perseverant	Do What's Right
	Stop Killing	Knowing How to Balance		Protective	Protect from Criminal Threats

3.2.1 Connections to Assessment Criteria by Theme

Just: The vast majority of participants have been economically vulnerable at various points in their lives. Many still are. As such, most find so many officers' slap-dash decisions to fine and arrest, and their presumptions of them to be a criminal (i.e., terrible person), profoundly difficult to excuse. Even when participants plead their cases and win in court, and even when judges explicitly affirm their position publicly, they have already lost time and money from taking time off from work. Sometimes, their lives have been restricted in a major way until the matter is resolved (such as having a license confiscated by an officer on the spot). And, even when their fines are nullified, they must still pay court fees. This is why in participants' sense-making of officers doing what is right, they call on officers to not only do what is legal, or even what is rightful, but to be a good person. Though officers who treat people fairly will almost certainly do less harm to them, the Just theme maps neatly onto the Do What's Right theme. Aligned subcategory pairings are (a.) Upright – Have Good Character, (b.) Fair – Be Fair, and (c.) Lawful & Transparent – Follow Law/Policy.

Communicative: The call for officers to employ people skills, communicate respectfully and with an open mind, and to relate and seek understanding, fits best with the Mediate and Problem-Solve theme. Participants place a high premium on officers using communication to gather information and make prudent decisions. They also

believe that many problems can be solved by talking through them to find common ground. Thus, they see communication as a tool in the officer's toolbelt of leadership and peacekeeping. Aligned subcategory pairings are (a.) Sociable – Resolving & Handling Situations, (b.) Respectful – Defusing Situations, (c.) Open-Minded – Getting Everyone's Side of the Story, and (d.) Relatable & Understanding – Try to and Understand People.

Invested: Participants' desire for officers to extend compassion and kindness, care for those they protect and serve, and be community-oriented most closely maps onto the Be Part of the Community theme. Aligned subcategories are (a.) Compassion & Kindness – Be Courteous, (b.) Caring – Show You Care, and (c.) Community-Oriented – Get Involved as well as Guide People. This theme could also be seen as an antidote to officer behavior that threatens and harms. Presumably, participants believe that officers having a stake in people's lives, caring about their well-being, and being able to see their humanity (as well as remember their own), inoculates the officers from an inclination to harass, use over-aggressive approaches, and resort to deadly force due to heavy biases. Many participants believe that officer involvement in the community would expose the officer to the community's goodness (especially in and through its children), which would reinforce the officers' capacity to care.

Composed: Participants' call for officers to manage their fear and aggression, and to be clear-minded and calm directly aligns with the theme Stop Harming and

Threatening Us. Though (a.) Manager of their Own Fear pairs with Stop Bias, and (b.) Manager of their Own Aggression matches with Stop Over-Aggression, participants describe how both emotions play into a range of harmful behaviors. Their goal for officers to regulate themselves in order to achieve and maintain calm is clearly to prevent these two harmful outcomes as well as the other two: Stop Harassment and Stop Killing.

Discerning and Adaptive: The thrust of this theme is wanting officers to be equipped to adapt to any situation, given how unpredictable and fast-moving an officer's encounters can be. Participants are clear-eyed about the real threats present in their communities, given 71% have themselves been a crime victim, 52% a victim of violent crime, and 57% a witness to a violent crime. It is why one of their top concerns is for law enforcement to Protect them Against Criminal Threats—the theme with which Discerning and Adaptive is most closely aligned.

With respect to subcategories, Knowing (smart, critical thinking) and Knowing What Matters are particularly well-suited to Solving Crime. But, all four Discerning and Adaptive subcategories are seen as helping officers to Catch Real Criminals and Prevent, Stop, or Lower Crime. Also notable about this theme is its double duty equipping officers to avoid harm and collateral damage to participants and community members. It is participants' first-hand experiences with officers too often proceeding without

caution, that motivates their desire for officers to continuously learn, update their knowledge, and balance their approach to people.

Dedicated Professional: Participants have a very clear idea of what constitutes professional behavior in general, and what they believe professional behavior should be in particular for an officer, sometimes explicitly commenting on what is and what is not “professional.” Their concept of professionalism comes from having worked themselves in various industries (including customer-facing occupations) and from seeing officers whose qualities they deemed effective, impressive, and even inspiring.

The Dedicated Professional theme, unlike the other behavioral themes from this chapter, does not align with one single assessment criteria theme from Chapter Two. Rather, it connects to several because of its forged identity as a positive, passionate, hard-working protector—a dedicated guardian. Their call for positivity and a passion for service are best fits for the Be Part of the Community theme. Participants describe these as qualities that do or would attract people to officers and make them want to engage and build relationships.

The desire for officers to be perseverant, which includes terms like hard-working, energetic, and patient has a virtuous connotation. This connects to the Do What’s Right theme, tying together their sense of officers Just Doing their Job and officers having Good Character. Finally, participants want to actually be safe. But, some

also express a desire to “feel” safe and see it as part of an officer’s job to feel assuring. Participants’ desire for officers to help them to feel a sense of safety, best matches with Protect Us from Criminal Threats.

The purpose of this exercise to see how well officer attributes map onto assessment criteria is to check for consistency in participants’ thinking and draw out the connections participants make between what it would take for them to be and feel safe and officers’ role in that.

3.3. Policy Recommendations

As discussed in Chapter Two, participants find the unpredictable nature of their encounters with police highly problematic. They find it anxiety-inducing that they never know what they are going to get. Some participants speak of police officers in individual terms. For example, they see unfair acts by an officer in terms of exercising their own free will, operating on personal biases, and in spite of adequate police training and/or clear departmental norms. These participants call for stronger vetting of candidates, making sure their record on important personality traits, habits, and values passes muster.

For other participants, the extraordinary variation in the quality of treatment they may experience or witness from one officer to the next, approaches arbitrariness. Because they view the variance or arbitrariness as sustained and *permitted* to sustain,

they see these individual unfair acts by officers as accumulating evidence of systemic injustice. Because they do not believe their White counterparts experience the same treatment, they often attribute the injustice to racial bias. But, even without diagnosing the cause, they find such unpredictability odious and inherently corrosive to the relationship.

While participants lament officers abusing the singular power and discretion they have, they simultaneously support officers having the power to make constructive decisions in solving problems and keeping the community safe. Participants also discuss the difficult nature of dealing with human beings, some of whom may be erratic from drug abuse or hardened and dangerous. For these reasons, they do not seek to eliminate discretion or turn officers into robots. Rather, they want the department to get the best humans possible to make ultimate human decisions humanely. Their ideal behavioral officer profile reveals a portrait of a professional who is the best of the best when it comes to thinking, processing collaboratively, and making difficult decisions. It is a person whose sound judgment is rooted in understanding, a caring and firm leader worthy of following, a just and knowledgeable enforcer of the rules who is also committed to the greater good.

The following policy recommendations aim to help Durham and other police departments first select candidates on their record of having demonstrated that they are

just, professional, communicative, invested, composed, and discerning and adaptive.

Next, recommendations target recruitment, training, commendations, and promotions, ensuring that these behavioral ideals are pulled through an officer's entire career, and pulled through the entire department from bottom to top.

R1. Hiring leaders should externalize the current process by which applications and resumes are reviewed, the questions that are asked and how answers are scored. An updated or new rubric should be created to standardize how applications and resumes will be read, evaluated, and scored based on the addition of these categories, and there should be clear guidelines about how these categories will be weighted relative to existing categories.

R2. Departments should create multiple opportunities to evaluate candidates' abilities on these metrics, including the following:

- the kind of accomplishments that could serve in a person's work and academic record;
- answers to new application questions that ask candidates to specify examples of the behavioral ideals in their record;
- answers to short essay questions that evaluate candidates on ideal characteristics after the initial application phase, once candidates enter the next hiring phase; and
- answers to interview questions that include scenarios, and ask the candidate to "walk the interviewer" through their logic.

R3. The "psychological exam" used by departmental psychologists and others to administer assessments for officer fitness should be fully reviewed in accordance with the behavioral ideals. The expert panel should be widened to include culturally competent psychologists, psychiatrists, and other relevant experts who have experience operationalizing these specific behavioral ideals (or similar characteristics) in assessment form. The department should account for a training, testing, and refinement period.

R4. Hiring leaders should review marketing and training materials to determine whether their current recruitment efforts are consistent with these behavioral ideals and make adjustments.

R5. Relatedly, recruiters should be included early in the review process to identify all of the points of departmental cultural inconsistency with these behavioral ideals, discuss them honestly, and begin re-writing recruitment language, pitches, and answers to prospectives' questions.

R6. Academy and other departmental training leaders should review training protocols and role-playing scenarios, as well as academy exam materials to assess consistency with these behavioral ideals. The Department should modify the curriculum and testing materials as necessary, ensuring that trainers are involved in the change process.

R7. The Department should convene leaders involved in the commendations process. It should review evaluative criteria and make them consistent with behavioral ideas, strengthen and clarify any language on nomination forms as well as communications encouraging nominations. Aggressively promote the winners of commendations as examples of cultural values and give meaningful material prizes to winners (based on survey results of all officers about incentives, so the department has current and actionable information about the range and nature of incentives their officers find meaningful).

R8. The Department should complete a full review of the promotions process. At each stage of promotion, examine the eligibility criteria and rubrics used to score for consistency with behavioral ideals, and make changes accordingly. Complete an audit of the modified promotional guidelines using actual promotion case files from the previous five years. Discuss lessons learned and make any necessary refinements to the guidelines.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter describes participants' ideal behavioral officer profile. Using responses to three questions about participants' beliefs about important officer

personality traits, behaviors, and values, I categorize participants' responses into six themes: officers who are just, dedicated professionals, communicative, invested, composed, and discerning and adaptive.

I show why participants view these behavioral ideals as important to have in officers, and the goals participants are trying to achieve. I also show how these behavioral ideals map onto the way in which participants assess agencies broadly, to explain how the participants' overarching goal is to choose officers whose character is reliable and consistent rather than capricious, and whose skillset and values bring consistency and balance to chaotic circumstances. This leads to policy recommendations designed to recruit, select, encourage, and promote officers with these behavioral ideals, so that officers—properly selected and equipped—would be able to successfully and reliably carry out their vision for policing.

The Golden Rule and other time-honored philosophies motivate their desires for change, which is why—to participants—their needs and wants feel natural and basic. In response to what they see as officer unpredictability, they do not choose to restrict discretion but to embrace it. In exchange, they want officers whose core values and abilities equip them to use such discretion wisely, fairly, and effectively to protect their safety and freedoms.

4. Chapter Four: Raising the Level of Trust

[To increase trust], I think [officers] could be more humble and approachable. And they could view us as human beings instead of ... or view us the same as White men, you know what I mean? Give us the same respect and opportunities that they would give White men on the other side of the spectrum. Then, I think we'd be like, "Okay. The police, they are good people, or, like, we can deal with the police if they treated everybody equally."

Travis, 24

Chapter Four focuses on how participants conceptualize trust. I ask whether participants trust officers, their reasons for why or why not, how to improve trust, and the existence and nature of any personal ties to law enforcement. Again, we see a range of viewpoints on whether participants trust police from a Hard No to a Hard Yes. And, we see their nuanced rationales that lead to categories in between. Those nuances carry forth in their answers as to why they trust or do not trust, as they examine the question from several vantage points. In their responses for how officers can increase their trust, we see their familiar tendency to believe that what they want is so self-evident—such a natural outflow of their identity as citizens or humans—that police already do it for White folks. Paraphrasing Travis's exhortation above, "Just do that same thing for us too, and we'll be good."

In keeping with previous chapters in which participants' concerns largely stem from officer unpredictability, we see the consequence manifest in a lack of trust. An important finding is that most participants are willing to extend some level of trust to

officers who do what is required to earn it—who predictably or consistently hold themselves and others accountable to standards of integrity, who are humble and fair-minded, bring peace to situations, and assume responsibility for the community as stewards. A surprising finding is that most participants know at least one member of law enforcement personally. The nature of these relationships varies but raise questions about one potential reason for nuance in participants’ perspectives.

4.1 Participants’ Views About Trust

In this chapter, understanding participants’ views on trust will further illuminate their assessment of where the Durham Police Department currently stands and what it would take to move the department closer to participants’ standards. Unlike the last chapters in which findings emanated from several combined interview questions, here, I will present findings for each question, individually:

1. There’s a lot of debate about whether police are trustworthy. Do you trust police? (Trust)²⁰
2. Why or why not? (Reasons Trust Police/Don’t Trust Police)²¹
3. What can officers do to increase the trust people would place in them? (Increase Trust)²²

²⁰ Question 12 on the interview protocol.

²¹ Also Question 12 on the interview protocol. I wait until after they answer, “Do you trust police?” to ask the follow-up question, “Why,” if they say “Yes,” or “Why not,” if they answer, “No.”

²² Question 14 on the interview protocol.

4. Do you know any police personally? (Relationship)²³
5. How would you describe that relationship? (Nature of Relationship)²⁴

For ease of reference, I have included an abbreviated description of each item in parentheses. Participants' answers to whether they trust police—in keeping with their previous nuanced answers—fall into five categories: Hard No (10), Lean No (5), It Depends (3), Lean Yes (2), and Hard Yes (1). The largest category, unsurprisingly, is “Hard No.” These participants state unequivocally that they do not trust police officers. They offer no exceptions to their lack of trust, and they express no willingness to trust officers in the future. Unqualified no answers include Justin's, 27, “Mm-mm,” while shaking his head from side to side as well as Jonathan, 23, and Kevin's, 21, simply stated, “No.” Hard No's also include Marcus, 25, Derek, 22, and Malachi's, 23, respective answers: “I don't trust police. I don't. Let me tell you why...”; “Not at all”; and “Absolutely not. I don't trust police.” Jordan's, 24, “Hell no!” is the most exuberant. What may be surprising, however, is that a minority of participants report total lack of trust, with the majority reporting some current levels of trust or a willingness to trust under certain conditions (11 of 21 participants). Figure 1 on the next page, “Do You

²³ Question 25 on the interview protocol.

²⁴ Also Question 25 on the interview protocol. Once the participant answers, “Yes,” I'll ask them, “How would you describe that relationship,” as a follow-up question.

Trust Police?" shows participants' answers to the Trust question out of 21 total cases.

Stacked highest at a Hard No with ten of 21 cases, the remaining order flows downward.

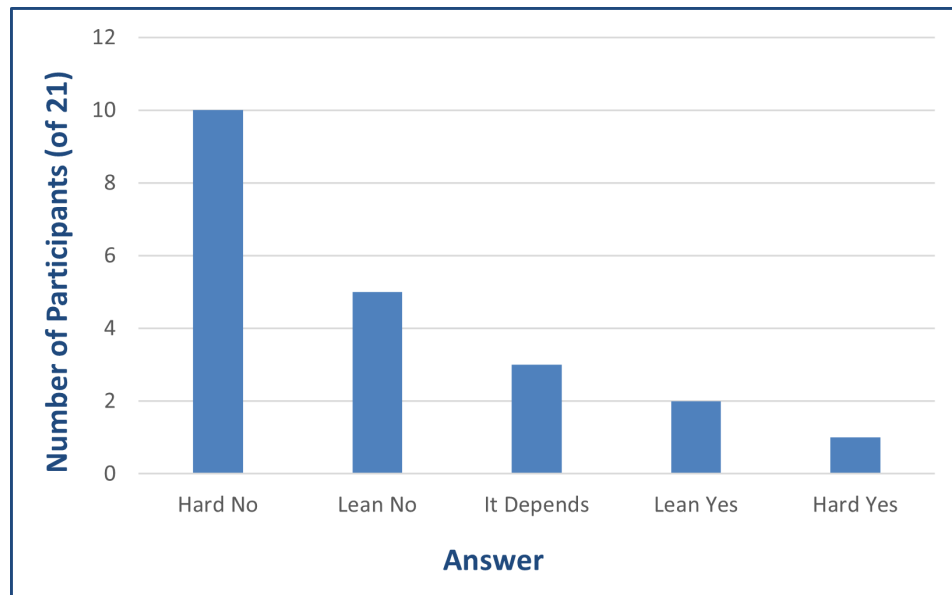


Figure 1: Do You Trust Police?

“Lean No” means that the participant adopts a general stance of withholding trust but either makes a current exception with (a) certain officer(s) they know or would make an exception under particular circumstances (which will be explained in the next section under “Reasons for Trusting the Police”). Examples of these qualified noes come from Ellis, 24, with the following: “Nah. I mean, I trust my cousin. He’s a detective. But, that’s about it,” and Elijah, 27, “Nuh-uh. Certain ones. Certain ones.” Here’s Jay, 31, who

has had, likely, the highest police contact of all participants, estimating he has been arrested at least 30 times:

In my heart I don't. I don't 100% trust them. Unless it's an officer that I know. An officer that I'm cool with. I know that they're straightforward. But, like, just a new officer tellin' me? Oh, no. Mm-mm.

The category "It Depends" reflects a greater degree of willingness to extend trust based on context. There is still suspicion towards officers, but these participants are prone to evaluating each officer or situation individually before making a judgment. Dion, 24, answers, "I trust certain police. It's certain ones that you can trust, it's certain ones you can't." While similar to the Lean No category, his delineation of certain officers *not* being trustworthy, takes Dion out of the Lean No category in which untrustworthy officers are the default. He does not assume untrustworthiness, like his counterparts in the Hard and Lean No categories. Dion's language invoking officer trustworthiness as a toss-up, as opposed to a trustworthy officer being an exception to the general rule, places Dion's answer into this new category of "It Depends." In Dion's case, his trust depends on the officer: in the other two cases, participants' trust in officers depends on situational factors. In Tommy's, 27, decision-making about whether to trust, it matters who initiates the interaction, him or the officer:

Do I trust police? To a certain extent. If I call you, I'm trusting you. I'm putting my trust in you by calling you. But, if you just pull me over, or I'm walking somewhere and you ask me for my identification, then I'm not trusting you.

Travis, 24, lays out the most detailed mental calculation for granting trust in this exchange:

Interviewer: There's a lot of debate about whether police are trustworthy. Do you trust police?

Travis: I would say that would probably depend on the situation.

Interviewer: Tell me more.

Travis: Let me say, if we were here, and somebody just came over here and shot me for no reason and you called the police, but I didn't die, I would trust that the police would get here. Because of the area that we're in, I would trust that they would come over here and try to identify the shooter and stuff like that. I honestly can say that. But, that would just be in this situation. Now, okay, say we're in the neighborhood, and somebody just broke into a house or something like that and then the police got called, and I just happened to be walking in that same neighborhood, and I got dark clothes on and I'm just walking, minding my business. Would I trust that the police officers would come up and think that I wasn't the person that broke into the house even though I'm blatantly just walking, and my house might be in that same neighborhood? No. I'm absolutely going to believe that the police officers are going to think I'm the one that broke into that house, and I'm going to jail.

Travis externalizes several important beliefs here. First, he trusts that police would respond in an emergency and try to prevent him from dying. This should not be taken for granted. Some participants vigorously assert that police in their neighborhoods frequently do not respond to shootings and other emergencies in a timely manner and attribute their unresponsiveness to a host of reasons, ranging from incompetence to willful neglect.

Second, Travis explains his trust in terms of confidence that police would investigate to find the perpetrator, because of the area or neighborhood where the hypothetical crime occurred. Implicit is his lack of trust or confidence that police would perform this basic function of their jobs in other neighborhoods—likely those that are marginalized or that contain people who are marginalized. Travis considers contextual geographical/socioeconomic characteristics in his decision of whether to trust officers to carry out their duties. The neighborhood he refers to is where he and I sat at a park picnic table. Huge new homes had begun to spring from dilapidated blocks with stunning acceleration—a complete turnover imminent.

It is also possible that Travis is adding another layer to his analysis when he says, “if you called the police...” (meaning me, an African American woman from Colorado with a middle-class background en route to a second advanced degree). He may be assuming or making an informed guess that my status as an educated, socioeconomically advantaged person—detectable by my accent—would give me the clout necessary to summon police to come and motivate them to search for his would-be assailant. Participants regularly consider markers of class when discussing police bias, including “how people talk.” And, several participants asked politely about my origins and education prior to interviews or just after they concluded.

Finally, in the context of a homeowner here being robbed, Travis does not trust that officers would believe him to belong in the neighborhood. He lacks trust that officers would be able to conceive of him as a non-suspect, such as an innocent bystander or possible witness who might provide helpful information as to the actual suspect. His experience with police impedes his trust that police would give him the benefit of the doubt or do their due diligence to determine whether he could have committed the crime. Travis's use of the word "blatant," is telling. He indicates that police would override or discard important information, because they are so biased in their presumptions of guilt for people like him. Travis describes his trust in terms of the confidence with which he could estimate the likelihood police would aid him as a gunshot victim, and the likelihood police would view him as a perpetrator and arrest him without due process.

In the "Lean Yes" category, these participants are prone to trusting police officers but still harbor reservations due to concerns about potentially being harmed by them. They desire to trust fully but cannot bring themselves to completely set aside anxiety. Malcolm, 22 answers, "I would say 'yes,' but I wouldn't say fully." Otis, 20, similarly replies:

I feel like most cops are [trustworthy]. I've never had a reason not to trust the police. But for some reason, there's always just something in me that's just telling me, "Oh, don't trust the police."

The sole unqualified yes answer needs a category of its own: “Hard Yes.” When asked whether he trusts police, Joseph, 20, is the only interviewee who affirms, “Yes,” without caveat or hesitation.

4.1.1 Reasons for Trusting the Police

All three Hard Yes and Lean Yes respondents share positive formative experiences with police officers at some point during the interview, that may have contributed to their high levels of trust. Joseph, 20, with parent and sibling police officers notes, “I was raised to trust police” when discussing why he “honors the badge.” Otis, 20, participated in an officer-led summer program (G.R.E.A.T.) in middle school, which culminated in a fun and memorable trip to Washington, D.C. for a week visiting the White House and monuments with the officer. As previously mentioned, officers rescued Malcolm, 22, and his mother from the greatest threat he or they had ever faced when they stopped the abusive boyfriend from potentially burning them alive. His subsequent interactions with officers consisted of getting stickers, and he did not encounter another officer until adulthood as a passenger in a vehicle, which was uneventful. In answering why he trusts police, Malcolm responds, “If it weren’t for the police, like, it would be chaos.”

Earning It: These vivid, positive experiences with police officers beginning at a young age could have helped anchor these participants’ trust at higher levels than

expected for this demographic, and indeed at the highest levels of their cohort. Most significantly, however, six participants coalesce around one answer for their willingness to extend trust: *because the officer earned it*. Joseph, 20; Elijah, 27; and Dion, 24, use the word “earn,” with Joseph declaring: “I trust police, because they've earned my trust.” Dion explains effort plus time equals his trust: “That’s how you got to earn my trust; I’ve got to be knowing you for a little minute so you can get trust from me.”

Participants also describe the process by which officers earned their trust through positive experiences. For instance, Ellis’s detective cousin helped him get a criminal charge dropped as a teenager. Dion, 24, whose Trust answer falls into the It Depends camp, reports the most personal relationships with officers at three, and shares that the officers (one cousin and two older friends) demonstrated their genuine care for him over several years’ time, even before entering law enforcement. He contrasts these officers who know *him* with others he cannot trust because those officers suspect him, look up his record, and then attempt to leverage this information during their exchanges:

I trust certain police. It's certain ones that you can trust, it's certain ones you can't. The ones that I trust, them the ones that I've been knowing as I've been growing up. So, most of them still work, and some of them not. I be talking to police officers, like the ones that come see us. Not no other ones. I ain't snitching, I ain't doing none of that, but other than that, he'll come ask me how I'm doing, how life going. I trust them, but I can't trust the other ones, because they're letting me know what's going on with myself, like what's going on with my background and my record.

What I got going on, and stuff like that. Them the only ones I can trust, you feel me?

This notion of officers earning trust surfaces again in the context of why some participants **do not** trust police, as they explain that officers must earn their trust just like any other stranger. Moreover, earning trust re-surfaces in discussions about how to increase trust.

4.1.2 Reasons for *Not* Trusting the Police

Participants use three frames to answer why they do not trust police. Irrespective of the frame, they are concerned that trusting police may bring harm to them. First, participants look inward, often using “I” statements. In this **Self-Reflective** frame, they refer to internal mechanisms that explain their inclinations, such as their personal history handling trust issues generally.

Second, participants reflect on the structural conditions that compromise an officer’s trustworthiness. Here, they identify departmental or cultural factors that shape officer decision-making through incentives and disincentives. In this **Structural** frame, participants cannot trust police officers who are wholly insulated from the communities they claim to protect and serve through actions that differentiate, isolate, and favor officers.

The third frame participants use is **Officer Behavior**, in which they consider direct behaviors by the officers themselves that render them untrustworthy. This frame hangs on two behaviors—those that are **Violative** of participants’ rights and ideals and those that **Endanger** them.

4.1.2.1 Frame #1: Self-Reflective Reasoning

Sixteen of 21 participants reflect internally on why they do not trust police, with the goal of protecting their own safety and well-being. They share the physical sensations they feel when they see or interact with officers, which they heed as internal cues to keep them safe. They also reflect on their general pre-disposition to trusting people and what it takes for them to give trust.

Gut Reaction: Seven participants describe having a visceral response to officer presence. The implication here is that they would have to ignore or override such sensations warning them of possible danger. Tommy, 27, Malcolm, 22, and Nathan, 30, describe their physiological responses to officers as “antsy,” “uneasy,” and “cautious,” respectively. Carlos, 30, describes feeling “uncomfortable,” while Malachi, 23, offers, “I just can’t trust police. Everything about police just makes me nervous and weird.” Kevin, 21, characterizes all police interactions as potentially high stakes in which he is most likely to sustain some sort of loss:

Nine times [out of]10, we're trying to get back home to our kids. We're just trying to get through the day. Now, if I go out, or something like that and 12 stops me, I'm either worried about will I get shot? Am I going to make it home? A, all the way to Z, it's going to be something. What's going to get taken from me? It's just somethin'.

No-Trust Default: The most oft-cited reason for mistrust (8 of 21 participants) is that participants don't trust anyone they do not know. Here's Malik, 28, answering whether he trusts police: "No. I don't trust nobody I don't know, period." Carlos, 30, calls himself "very distrusting" and "a skeptic." Dion, 24, says, "I don't trust people; I got trust issues."

Just as proud parents might be glad their child internalized lessons of "Stranger Danger" when tested, there is a normative quality to Sean's, 20, statement, "I don't really trust no one I don't know, honestly," when he immediately follows with, "I don't feel like you supposed to trust just anyone." To that very point, Jordan, 24, believes he is not supposed to trust anyone either. But, he is more specific. He shudders at the thought of putting his life in anyone else's hands. For him, it's not personal. Self-reliance is a moral imperative:

'Cause number one, I don't want to feel that I have to put trust on my life to nobody anyway. I feel like if something is going to happen, I'mma trust myself. I'mma trust me. I'd rather die by trusting myself than trusting somebody else. I wouldn't, just because...you're puttin' your guard down.

At only 15 years old, Justin, 27, was shocked and horrified when a neighborhood interloper suddenly murdered his best friend, shooting him in the face upon losing

money in a dice game. Justin and the others who had been playing, dove for cover as the man robbed his friend back of the money he had lost and fled. Even for his public housing complex he described as rife with violent criminals and gangs, it was an act so beyond the pale that neighbors swiftly called police and described the man so he could be brought to justice. He was. Yet, the next year Justin was himself shot multiple times and left for dead in a park, having been resuscitated by medics. "I don't trust nobody," Justin says when asked why he doesn't trust police. "It's just how I've always been." What makes this answer even more stunning is that Justin describes in other parts of the interview how police killed two close friends of his and how he angrily watched them arrest his father on several occasions as a child, for domestic violence against his mother. He invokes none of this when asked directly about his distrust. He simply says he doesn't trust anyone.

It is not so much that participants are making a special effort to distrust police; it is that they are not willing to make a special effort to *trust* police. Hence, Derek's 22, statement, "I'm not that quick to trust a person if I don't really even know you. That's no matter what your job title is." Given the many threats participants faced growing up, which afflicted their families and communities (and that some may still face), it makes sense that we would see a low-trust default any stranger would have to overcome by proving themselves genuine and well-intentioned, which participants note takes time.

This time-based or evidence-based criterion Dion, 24, mentions in his effort-plus-time-equals-trust formula, echoes in Malachi's, 23, explanation for not trusting police:

"Because, one, I don't know him personally. Whenever I'm trusting you, we got to be in some type of relationship." Tommy, 27, also notes that gaining people's trust will take time, saying, "that's gonna be hard to gain trust...if they've been a victim. To gain it back, you just gotta play it slowly."

Gotta Earn Trust: For this reason, four participants (with only Sean, 20, overlapping from the previous group of eight) say they do not trust officers, because officers have not earned their trust. For example, after Sean, 20, says he does not feel like he is "supposed to trust" strangers, he expounds, "I feel like a person should have to show you that you can trust them." Elijah, 27, best captures this sentiment, explaining why he generally does not trust police but how one could earn his trust. He references an officer he had spoken about earlier in the interview who was called to arrest him and his friend at a mall for stealing shoes when he was a homeless teenager. Instead of arresting them, the officer made them return everything and apologize, took them to McDonald's seeing that they were hungry, gave them a stern but loving talking-to, and then dropped him off at the group home where he had been residing. It was a gesture that still moves him close to tears as he recalls the officer's compassion and good nature:

I feel like you really got to show ... you've got to earn trust to get trust. The only police I trust, maybe the one that helped us that day at the mall. I don't really run into one and really feel like I should trust them, you know? Hopefully, one day, they get that trust.

The revelation that the participants most distrustful of police are distrustful of most people, generally, is meaningful. It means, for example, that these participants would likely not accede to requests to give information as a witness, from an officer they did not know (especially without knowing the victim). But, participants also imply that officers who take the time to earn trust before the moment it is needed, might achieve deeper levels of trust from a wider array of people in the community. As such, this known officer would be more likely to elicit cooperation. Trust is not attainable for all of the participants. Certainly, Jordan, 24, who equates trusting police with entrusting his life to them, and who says he was “raised not to trust police,” could not fathom ever trusting an officer. But, participants’ commentary suggests officers should view each interaction with the public as opportunities to plant seeds of goodwill, especially where relations are most fraught. Having neutral or non-negative experiences matters, which participants often refer to as officers “just doing their job.” Having positive experiences with officers seems to matter especially, both in countering prominent messages from family and friends discouraging trust in police and in countering previous negative experiences with police.

4.1.2.2 Frame #2: Structural Reasoning

Five of 21 participants point to factors that insulate officers from the community thereby making them less trustworthy than they might be otherwise. They find the current state of policing to be disconnected and alienating. When officers are called, it is because something negative has occurred. And, when officers appear without being requested, they take actions over which participants and their networks have little or no control, and no recourse when something goes wrong. To them, police do not seem to answer to the community, despite supposedly serving it. It is not clear they even answer to one another on matters of importance. Participants argue that, logically, this no holds-barred police environment will naturally produce untrustworthy officers.

Carlos's, 30, describes the sense of disconnect between police and community as so vast, it takes on an other-worldly character:

I think there's just this huge disconnection between people that are officers and citizens. I just don't think they get it, that once you take on that position, you're just in an isolated world...I feel like once you become an officer, you become separated from that world, from the world the rest of the citizens are living in, and you become inducted into this police society. You know?

Malik's, 28, comment below dovetails with this same complaint of disconnect. He talks about officers having negative associations when he was a kid growing up because of overwhelmingly seeing them when something bad happened:

I mean, the only time we saw police was when a crime was happening. Or, after a crime would happen, they'd call the police. But, even my neighborhood, I saw the

police all the time, every day. It was never nothin' good then with the police. They just came in because you called the police. Somebody got shot, somebody got stabbed, somebody got ran over, somebody's house got broken into. Other than that, you never had police like to get out, just walking the neighborhood.

In Malik's narrative, there is a sense of officers as disembodied from the community—some external hand reaching in for a short time before retracting and popping up elsewhere. Building on Carlos's comments about disconnection, Malik shows how negative associations can take hold and lead to alienation.

All of the participants using the structural frame view officers both as separated from the community and cleaving to one another inappropriately for protection. They lament officers using their individual agency to cover for each other but not correct each other. Derek, 22, asserts that even though "they are supposed to protect us," instead "they're going to protect their own." He expresses empathy that "they're going to make sure that they got each other's back," but says:

...they're supposed to be keeping law and order, and they're supposed to be protecting us. They most definitely can't have that thinking.

Participants, like Anthony, 22, find it difficult to trust police when good and reasonable officers seem unable to influence their peers' behavior or unwilling to report them for wrongdoing:

You know how many law enforcement agents there is everyday that get picked up, 'cause they don't report everything that they supposed to trying to save somebody else, or save they self. It's a lot, right?

With his rhetorical question, Anthony explicitly states it is commonplace for officers to be charged with failure to report. He may also be implying that such behavior is even more widespread than society believes, since those are only the officers getting caught that he sees on the news. Malik, 28, voices frustration at good officers who elect not to intervene in the decisions of fellow officers they know are in the wrong. He says that officers who lack the courage to speak up and prevent each other from making harmful decisions, should not be on the force. Here he is calling out a failure he believes contributed to a life being lost when two reasonable officers allowed a third officer to derail the encounter:

I just felt like the other officers could have prevented that, too. They had the situation under control, why you let somebody else come up and turn the whole situation different? Yeah, I think it's just a personal choice certain officers need to make. Their asses don't need to be on the force. Like, find you something else to do. Make room for some people that actually are a help.

Malik makes the point that if good police officers allow bad policing to flourish, then those officers cannot be trusted to protect and serve either. If a policing institution knows some of its officers are causing harm and does not change its policies or excise the offenders, then it cannot be trusted. Participants using this structural frame believe a lack of departmental accountability permits poor policing techniques and bad police officers to continue unabated. This belief that officers are unaccountable to community members is what renders them untrustworthy, as Nathan, 30, explains:

I feel like there isn't enough accountability for them to really not have an incentive to do the right thing at times. And I feel like over the course of history, with as much corruption that has been found in police departments, I feel like it's just a given that along the line, somewhere, somehow, one of them is going to be doing some shady stuff.

Here, Nathan is using both rational choice and historical reference to show the relationship between accountability, poor actions, and trust. He sees the withholding of accountability as a disincentive for officers to behave in an honest and trustworthy manner. He doesn't specify but mentions there is ample historical evidence of poor behavior of officers such that agencies should expect it and put accountability measures in place. Thus, he sees the persistent lack of accountability as willful, which prevents him from trusting police.

Participants consider structural factors or the context in which individual officers' decisions are made. Agencies that either do not hold officers accountable for bad behavior or do not sufficiently communicate their actions to hold officers accountable may do more damage to trust than they realize.

4.1.2.3 Frame #3: Officer Behavior Reasoning

Thirteen of 21 participants use direct officer behavior as a frame of reference for determining police trustworthiness. For these participants, there are two kinds of behavior officers can exhibit that would lead them to be untrustworthy. Nine of 21

participants describe behavior that violates their rights and/or ideals and seven of 21 discuss behavior that endangers their well-being.

Violate: The Violative behavior theme serves as a microcosm of the way in which participants often symbiotically pair constitutional policing with upstanding character throughout their interviews. They believe that honoring people's constitutional rights is required for fairness, but so is respecting someone's humanity required for righteousness. They believe officers should enforce the law and be bound by it themselves. They believe that being legalistic does not make one a good cop, but that being a good person will likely aid an officer in carrying out democratic principles. They lean into the discretion officers are afforded, but demand officers meet high character standards in return.

In answers of why they do not trust police, participants make clear that violating their core beliefs would be unbecoming of anyone, let alone someone in a position of power and authority. In addition to their words, participants' tone, facial expressions, and body language convey strong disapproval for three interconnected officer behaviors: dishonesty, prejudice, and cruelty.

Marcus, 25, alleges various instances of dishonesty, describing officers who lie to get what they want, behave hypocritically by ticketing and arresting people for infractions they flout, or engage in personal affairs while on the clock. Kevin, 21, also

alludes to officer dishonesty, painting them as tricksters who encourage people to talk, and act as if they understand, but then twist one's words in a way that brings harm.

Kevin calls himself hard-headed when younger, but laments that when he did attempt to cooperate, talking to police backfired enough to push him to silence permanently:

When it's all summed up, everything I say, the words get changed on it. Everything gets changed. What you'll tell them, it'll come back to play against you. That's why I just keep silent.

Similar to Kevin's allegation of officers intentionally twisting his and others' words around to use their words against them, Malik, 28, alleges similar sneakiness. He discusses when unscrupulous officers capitalize on rare positive moments with good officers to trick or catch those they think are criminals:

All the neighborhood kids, I'm talking about young kids, 10, 11, 12, they would be out there. Then, the older guys be standing around. Then as soon as police come by, everything just changed. Some used to get out and talk and play basketball with us; they was the good ones. And then, you'll have another officer pull up while that officer was playing. And then, he's sitting in his car just waiting on somebody to walk off so he can go around the block and stop and harass them. It's just when you do have a good moment with the police, it's something that comes along.

Just before this statement, Malik says officers are nearly always engaged in actions he associates with negativity. So, he finds it particularly disturbing the few positive moments are essentially commandeered to engage in other negative activities. He learns to distrust these positive moments because they will mostly likely come with something bad.

Anthony's, 22, concerns about officer dishonesty include officers planting evidence, saying, "...they be planting shit in people's cribs." Malik, 28, and Kevin, 21, discuss the connection between lying and denying due process, with Malik describing his experience of a pattern of officers claiming to "smell weed" as a pretext to stop him. Similar to planting evidence, Malik details a proactive willfulness on the officer's part to use dishonesty to nab people. Because officers' claims of smelling weed cannot be verified, thus police cannot be held accountable, Malik lingers on the insidious nature of the tactic, repeating its offensiveness several times:

And a lot of times, they always say, "We smell weed. We smell weed. Come over here, let me search you." Like, come on, man. I don't think you know what weed smells like, if you're saying you smell weed. That's always they line. "I smell weed, I smell weed." How do you smell weed riding around in a car with your windows up? How you smell weed when they in the car? Like, it's always weed. "I smell weed." That's their probable cause; they "smell weed." I could have swore they passed a bill where weed didn't constitute a search no more. At least I thought they did.

Manufacturing evidence is one behavior that violates participants' principles and sense of their rights of citizenship. Officers also violate participants' sensibilities when they take action against them without supporting evidence. Kevin, 21, expresses horror recounting his experience in which officers did not appear to be committed to the truth. He was accused by unspecified parties as having committed some crime, but in his estimation, officers grabbed ahold of these claims without doing due diligence to find out the truth by gathering evidence. He could not exonerate himself with truth, because

officers were unwilling to find it out. In Kevin's meticulous externalizing, we see how officers can be considered dishonest both when they tell active lies and when they capitalize on civilians' lies and fail to take affirmative action to uncover truth—which he and others view as requisite to conducting proper investigations.

In this story, Kevin describes anger at seeing an officer testify on the stand who was not the arresting officer (who had encouraged him to come quietly into custody since the accusations would not stick), and who did not recall the incident. So, Kevin says the officer parroted what the District Attorney had just read aloud, amounting to nothing more than “he said, she said,” accusations:

...you basically just went off what the person said before, or what the DA read off of paper. Like, no, it's garbage. Because I looked at my lawyer, and I said, “Okay, I just told you that there's no evidence on me, there's no nothing. And, the officer who originally put me in their car, why is he not here, because he's the one who told me there's no evidence, no nothing. Why is he not here? Why is she here?” [My lawyer responded,] “Because she was the one that was called on duty.” I said, “Okay, but still, obviously there's certain procedures that gotta be taken for this, and ain't no steps being taken. There's none whatsoever.” It's always, “There's a broad definition, it's a broad definition. It's more to it than just this simple fact.” I said, okay, but still, there's nothing. There's literally nothing. Just people coming to court saying, “he said, she said.” That's it. It's always just, “he said, she said.”

Violative behaviors also stem from officers' prejudgment of participants and others who share their characteristics, especially in terms of race, gender, age, and class. Ellis, 24, suggests that racial prejudice explains poor treatment of some groups, stating, “I mean, sometimes situations look like racism, the way they do certain people.” Jordan, 24,

calls prejudging “labeling,” and says that officers’ predetermination of people like him as criminals contributes to his distrust:

...being in the streets and being in hoods and stuff, they already label us. Just because he does this, he's a bad guy, or just because he does this, he's bad. It's like they're already trying to knock us down regardless of what our hustle is or what we're trying to do. Bad or good, they're still trying to knock us down...It's sad to say, because they're supposed to be there to protect and to help you. Shit, that's their purpose.

Carlos, 30, believes officers’ fear of Black men (due to prejudging them) not only causes officers to overcompensate through unnecessary and excessive aggression, it impedes thoroughness in their ability to assess situations, causing hasty decision-making. Carlos asserts officer prejudice makes them less responsive to the information in front of them. He says that rigid reliance on preset views of someone’s criminality can preclude officers from seeing and choosing the fairest response in a situation, saying, “...they don't fully assess situations. They don't know how to act...”

Just like the nightmarish hypothetical Travis, 24, spins in which officer prejudice causes him as an innocent bystander to be wrongly arrested for robbing someone’s home, Kevin, 21, describes that nightmare come to life in his retelling of having been falsely accused of a crime and sitting in jail for nine months without a trial. He defines prejudgment as everything being stacked against him from the beginning: “From the get-go, it was basically everything against me from the get-go.” Marcus, 25, also details a case of mistaken identity he believes stems from officers prejudging individuals and

predetermining their criminality. He recalls a situation years prior as a teenager when he walked his then-girlfriend to her high school:

...I had walked my girlfriend to school. I was walking, and I was on my way home. The police from the school pulled me over, thinking I was somebody else. They had a picture of who they were looking for and I ain't look nothing like him. And I'm just saying, "Y'all don't do y'all jobs, because if y'all did y'all job, you wouldn't be stopping me walking on the side of the street to put some picture beside me that don't look nothing like me, but you want to detain me. I don't even go to that school, so what makes you think I would even be him? And, if I did have a warrant from that school, you really think I would be walking around outside the school?... They had me detained for like a whole hour, trying to figure out who I was. They called one of the cops from the school and he pulled up and they were like, "Oh, that's not him," but I'm looking at the rest of them like, "Y'all work at that same school. How y'all didn't know that that wasn't me?" Yet, called somebody from the school and he come up, "No, that's not him. That's such and such, but I'm looking at you like you work up there too, so why you didn't know this? Y'all don't do y'all job. Y'all not trustworthy. Y'all acting like y'all doing y'all jobs, but you really not.

Cruel behavior also violates participants' sensibilities, contributing to their distrust. Officers in these examples are seen as taking gratuitous aim at participants or their identity group. As one of the few participants taking the "It Depends" stance, Dion, 24, readily offers his personal relationships with three exemplary officers as the kind one can trust. Then, he states there are "certain ones you can't" trust. Asked to elaborate on the kinds of officers that can't be trusted, Dion recalls school resource officers who went out of their way to yell mean-spirited comments toward him as he walked through the halls at school:

These are the ones that did something to me in the past, that I know that they used to work at my school, stuff like that. Used to say stuff to me that I ain't like. Smart stuff. I used to say stuff back, but I'll keep walking.

Malik's, 28, example of mean-spiritedness is more severe. After one of his best friends was shot and killed by police under controversial circumstances, he in conjunction with his friend's family and neighbors held a vigil, which he says police disbanded:

Then, when we had the vigil for him in the [public housing complex name removed] where he got shot, they came and broke that up... [There were] a couple of people who lived at that house and that lived, like, back to back to back. So, we had a little cake for his daughters and cooked on the grill, and stuff like that. We didn't even have no alcohol or nothing out there. About two hours later, you could see the police parked over there on the side. They start lining up. Then, they, "All right, everybody got to go. If you don't want to go home, you can go to jail." Like why? You done killed our homeboy. Now, you're telling us we can't even have a vigil for him. So, his brother, Paul, he was just like, "Man, you all just go on ahead, man. I ain't even trying to be going to another funeral."

Kevin, 21, also paints police as heartless. In his extended story about the aforementioned officer taking the stand to testify against him, he relays exasperation at the officer's callousness when his freedom and livelihood hung in the balance. He imitates sounds he says the unprepared officer made trying to think of answers about the incident in question, such as a slurping sound followed by "Blup, blup, blup, blup, blup, blup..." The officer's behavior on the stand signaled to him an utter disregard for his life, something he found cruel and contemptible:

An officer come to court and take the stand on me. Y'all supposed to be adults and everything like that, but as soon as you get on the stand, and then the judge asks what happened, you sit there, and this is literally what you do. "Hmm! Let me see. Ummmm," Then you start making a whole bunch of kid noises, and then you want to start basically talking like you're a professional?! You're playing with my life now. You're just sitting there playing with me, like I'm not in shackles, or like I'm not facing time. You're just sitting there playing with my life, like it don't mean nothing. There's no trust whatsoever. None. I just looked at my lawyer, I said, "Are

you serious?! This is really what's going on? Y'all brought me here for this, just for y'all to play with my life?" I said, "Bro, that's not okay, that's not okay at all." So, I don't trust them.

Officer dishonesty, predetermination of guilt, and cruelty violate participants' moral sensibilities. These violations of their rights and ideals are something that would earn the distrust of anyone they encountered but provoke a particular distaste when committed by those wielding society's greatest power and authority.

Endanger: The threat of bodily harm looms large for these participants. Some have watched videos showing aggressive or deadly behavior they worry may someday happen to them. Additionally, participants describe witnessing and/or interacting with officers who maintain a default posture of aggression or who are quick to verbally threaten force before assessing the situation. Some discuss their own proximity to officer-caused injuries or deaths. Their experiences with police harm make these threats far more credible.

In their answers for why they do not trust police, or do not trust them fully, Malik, 28; Jonathan, 23; and Malcolm, 22; all share examples of unprovoked, threatening behavior that gives them pause. Malik describes young, mostly White officers driving in their cars, readying themselves for a confrontation:

It's mostly younger White men that are more aggressive. You can see the aggression as soon as you—you can see them in the car, ready.

Jonathan shares how disconcerting it is that so many officers are quick to draw their guns and tasers while approaching someone, that they are already thinking about using their weapon even before they have information. While he thinks aloud about why he doesn't trust police, he repeatedly interrupts himself with thoughts that try to fairly consider the officer's perspective. Ultimately, however, he concludes resolutely that too many officers unnecessarily escalate situations because of their own over-aggression, and if they brought calm and composure to the interaction, most people would respond in kind:

And then, another reason I don't trust police, is because they have their—I mean, I understand you're doing your job, but when you approach... Okay, in the car you would have to have your hand on your gun. But, when you approach somebody, you don't have grab your gun. You don't reach for your taser. If you're coming in calm and collect, I'm pretty sure that other person is going to come, unless you're trying to take him to jail. They're not going to be happy about it. But, I feel like if you're coming at another human being calm and collect, even though you're in a uniform, if you talk to that person, like you got some sense, I feel like they should have some sense, to at least have a full-grown conversation with you.

Because Malcolm falls into the Lean Yes category on trusting police, his statement reveals how far-reaching the damage to trust can be when so many officers are, or are seen as, overly aggressive. Malcolm would like to be able to trust officers fully. But, the possibility of an officer harming him for a small infraction or for advocating for himself, keeps him from giving a Hard Yes answer:

You know something's wrong—not knowing if I'll live to my next birthday if I have an open beer container. I'm just uneasy. But, I wouldn't be, I would never be

disrespectful. I would do what I'm told, but we should be heard as well...Of course he's gonna ask me the stuff. But, what I'm saying is, if an officer had his mind made up, and he has, like, let's say probable cause. But, if you're not sure if he has probable cause, it should be okay for you to just ask a question or two. So, I feel like if you're not being disruptive, if you're not trying to put him in harm's way— I just feel like you should be able to have a conversation, without feeling like I better do what he's telling me to do.

Malik, Jonathan, and Malcolm make clear that officer over-aggression endangers them and is completely at odds with winning trust. It is not that these participants want officers to lose. They do not; they want officers to be safe. It is that they want officers to recognize when they are safe. And, they want officers to stop viewing so many situations as win-lose, which necessarily places participants on the losing side.

Beyond officers' threats to harm participants through aggressive posturing and commands, participants rely on past experiences of their own and those they care about. Jay, 31, recalls a time when he was inebriated and had been stabbed in the leg by a civilian. Injured, he was limping on the side of the road when officers found him. Confused and believing the officers to be his assailants catching up to him to finish what they had begun, he admits that he was "testy" with the officers and remembers trying to get away from them. But, rather than helping him, as they claimed they were doing, Jay says they punched him before dropping him off at the ER:

They beat me up on the side of the highway, because I was trying to get away from them, like, "No bruh, I'm good, bro. Leave me alone. Don't kill me. Y'all tryina kill me." They're like, "Hey, we're helping you." Boop! Boop! Beat me a little bit, took me to the ER, and dropped me off. That ain't gonna make me trust them. They beat

me. But, it was my fault though, 'cause I was trying to get away from them. But, they still didn't have to beat me. I'm already stabbed.

Jonathan, 23, also says that he wouldn't trust police officers because they "beat people up." He points to his brother's injuries and his own at the hands of police. And, just like Jay, he blames himself for the officer's actions.

My own personal brother had a busted lip from the police. I got my finger broke by a sheriff. Umm, I got tased in my back twice by a police officer. But, that was my own fault. But yeah, I wouldn't trust a police officer.

Since Jay and Jonathan assume blame for the officer's use of force, the implication here is that the officer could have made more constructive decisions, which could have engendered their trust. Jonathan and Malik, 28, also both cite officer-caused deaths of their loved ones as reasons they cannot trust police. Jonathan explains a hardening of his distrust for all police from an incident three years prior out of state:

One of my cousins in Pennsylvania got killed by a police officer...After my cousin got killed by an officer in Pennsylvania, I wouldn't trust 'em.

Malik painfully recalls losing one of his best friends at the hands of a Durham police officer. He says his friend, Kidd, had disobeyed a "no trespass" order barring him from entering the neighborhood, in order to deliver baby supplies to his girlfriend. Malik is particularly disturbed that two officers who were known in the community for being personable, calmly engaged Kidd, when a third officer, who had a reputation for

brutality and had previously arrested Kidd on drug charges, inserted himself into the situation and shot his friend in the back of the head:

There was one officer that killed my friend, Kidd, one of my best friends. Before he got killed, the other two officers that was there, it was just fine. As soon as he pulled up, it all went to hell. And he was *known* for that...when the other two officers were there, it was just a conversation. As soon as he pulled up, it got aggressive. Then next thing you know, he shot homeboy in the back of the head...They posted his autopsy report that *showed* that he was shot in the back of the head.

Malik later shakes his head, saying, "And he's back on the police force." This is also the aforementioned incident in which officers broke up the vigil for his friend (and in which Malik alleges two officers failed to prevent a third from wrongdoing). For Malik, the taking of life with apparent impunity, the antagonism in allowing a despised and still-dangerous officer to return to patrol while smearing his friend's name in the press, and the disruption of people trying to grieve and support Kidd's young daughters, amounted to a spectacular demonstration of endangerment that can only serve to undermine trust. Moreover, Malik declares it wasn't just he who lost trust in officers, but the community-at-large that was demoralized:

...after they killed Kidd, people don't deal with none of them officers like that no more—like they used to. You don't even want to get caught talking to a officer...it went from being able to throw your hands up to the cop or have a brief little "Hey, hey, hey how you doing?" to no interaction with them period, once he killed Kidd.

The vast majority of participants believe officers' purpose is to serve and protect. These answers to why participants do not trust police (to protect and serve them) are

because they see and experience police doing the opposite—endangering them via threats and deeds.

4.1.3 How Police Can Increase Trust

Participants' recommendations for how police can increase trust coalesce around three themes. They want police to *humble* themselves. They believe this a necessary first step in releasing a cascade of positive behaviors. They want officers to re-orient themselves as *peace-bringers* who understand their duty to bring and build peaceful communities. Finally, they want officers and agencies to be *community stewards*, promoting community cohesion while excelling in moral leadership.

4.1.3.1 Humility

Nine of 21 participants either say officers must exercise more humility to increase trust or recommend action that would require more humility. Participants view humility as a powerful countermeasure to officers placing themselves on a pedestal, refusing to see their humanity, and earning trust by working hard to build relationships versus relying on one's uniform to gain trust. Travis, 24, and Jonathan, 23, advise humility to gain trust, with Jonathan saying, "Just be more humble," and Travis saying, "I think they could be more humble and more approachable." Humility may also be understood in terms of vulnerability. Participants want officers to relate to them as human beings, which requires them to reveal their own humanity, as Jonathan explains:

Just because you have that badge doesn't mean you're not human. Some officers take that to the extreme, just being uptight all the time. Like for a White officer, it's okay for you to stop and talk to Black families, Black kids, without you feeling like you're doing something wrong and for us to feel like we're doing something wrong. It's okay.

Derek, 22, also thinks it is important for civilians to see the full humanity of officers, something only officers can choose to share. He urges them to make the effort:

With just showing people, I'm a person behind this: I go to church, I like basketball games, and I like music and all that stuff that you like. And, I do all of that when I don't work, when I don't have this uniform on. I'm not just riding around all day to lock people up and harass folks. But they don't ever make effort to show that part of the police.

Participants demand a paradigm shift in which officers relate to them as humans, placing everyone on equal footing and making all people deserving of dignity and respect. Marcus, 25, captures this most vividly in his impassioned call for officers to act human:

Go drop flowers off at some of these people's graves or something like that. Act like a human being. They want us to look at them like, "Oh, yeah, we're cops." But you're still a human being. You want us to treat you like human beings; act like you're a human being. It's just like being a cop and being a human is just like being a mother, because you never stop being a mother. Regardless, your kids grow up, they die, you're still a mother at the end of the day, regardless of where you work or what you do for a living. At the end of the day, you're a mother, and police officers should know, at the end of the day, you're still a human being. You ain't no better than nobody out here. You're human just like I am, you bleed just like I do, and you get up and go to work just like I do. What makes you think you're any better than me?

By letting their guard down, showing their feelings, and genuinely apologizing for wrongdoing, officers can present the vulnerability required to inspire community

members to let their guards down, too. Participants are calling for reciprocity as a gesture of goodwill. Just as they want officers to lead by example, they want officers to show humanity, to earn trust to get trust, and to **give** trust in order to get trust, as Elijah, 27, explains:

To build trust in somebody, you gotta have that time and that effort. And, to gain trust with somebody, they've got to open up, too. You can't just try to grab trust from them. You've got to kind of open up, too. You can't have someone trying to pull it, and you're pulling back, too. So, you've got to give a little bit to open that trust. It's going to be hard for him to gain trust, because you don't know him, and he don't know you. If you keep trying, keep trying, sometimes it don't work just like that. (Snaps finger.) It takes time. So, you've got to have that time and that patience to earn that trust, and you've got to be willing to open up to let somebody gain that trust. It might take a while for them to gain trust, but it can happen. Over time, it can happen.

4.1.3.2 Peace-bringers

The vast majority of participants support the vision of policing that there should exist a specially trained group of qualified people who enforce important laws and norms, and promote safety so everyone can live their lives in peace. Eleven of 21 participants call for officers to minimize the number of victims by preventing harm from happening. At a minimum, bringing peace to a situation requires officers to not disturb it with their own negative interjections. Here, participants call for officers to stop targeting Black people unfairly through “profiling” (Malcolm, 22), “harassment” (Otis, 20 and Ellis, 24), and disparate treatment (Kevin, 21, and Carlos, 30). Living in beleaguered communities, the last thing participants need or want is police as part of the

problem rather than the solution. Otis, 20, summarizes this basic first step: "Just not harassing them. If you see they're not doing anything wrong, then why would you create a situation?"

Step number two to bringing peace is de-escalating tensions. Participants say officers can use their words to calm environments down, increase understanding, and resolve problems before violence erupts or escalates. Akin to desires in Chapter Two for officers to be composed, Carlos, 30 admonishes officers to "be the clear head in the situation," despite fear they may feel. He states, rather than "pulling out your gun," officers should remember that "they got all the power to diffuse" situations and that they "gotta realize the influence and impact they have." Participants believe officers should "communicate more" often (Justin, 27 and Marcus, 25) and "respectfully" (Elijah, 27) by giving people a "chance to speak on their own behalf" (Kevin, 21) and seeking "understanding" (Otis, 20, and Carlos, 30). Otis elaborates on how good communication aids de-escalation:

Try to be more understanding or compliant with people, and just showing people that they understand how they feel and not really force or enforce their authority on people. But, more so just treat people like normal people. If someone is having a, say, domestic issue, then instead of making an issue worse by letting their own emotions get into the situation, trying to de-escalate the situation. Try to talk more to people [instead of], for instance, roughing up the guy and making the situation worse.

The third part of bringing peace is stopping and preventing civilian homicides. Consistent with Chapter Two's "Protect Us from Criminal Threats" assessment criterion, participants say police would have to dramatically reduce the number of crime victims in order to gain trust. Dion, 24, who has been shot, wants police to "do more" to "clean up the streets," in order to earn his trust. Additionally, he is frustrated by officers' inability to protect children and haunted by a belief that some officers purposely delay entry into dangerous situations so they do not get hurt, while allowing civilian casualties to accumulate:

They can earn my trust by making sure these kids stop getting shot. Even the kids, look out for the little kids. Sometimes you got the police sitting right there in your neighborhood, people start shooting, they don't even move. They don't move sometimes. They'll probably get there like 20, 30 minutes later after it happens. Everybody be dead by then. Dead. I done seen that happen before, too.

Jordan, 24, also expresses pain over the tragic levels of bloodshed. He demands that police do "what the community needs to happen to stop the killing, stop so much violence." Then, he expresses confusion about why that is. Unlike, Dion, he does not attribute the deaths to delayed response, but to poor allocation of resources. He believes police are neither patrolling in the correct locations nor often enough:

I don't understand. There are all these goddamn police out here now, and niggas are still dying. Niggas are still dying. Stopping the goddamn killing, really. I feel like that's what they should be doing, stopping the killing. I see so many undercover cars, polices, but they never be in the certain spot or the neighborhood where the killing is actually happening. If they are out there, if they do be out there, they be out there during the day, but when nighttime comes, the police get

out of there. [They should be] patrolling more, I guess. Shit happen any given time of day, but still, if you're patrolling more and you're checking on the neighborhood more, less shit going to happen. Because they're going to be like, "Oh yeah, boy, the goddamn police are rolling through here." Like, they gon' know.

Whether participants are referring to officers entering situations in a peaceful and peaceable manner, seeking peaceful resolutions to disputes, or restoring peace by preventing civilians from carrying out harm or removing those who do, participants see officers' ability to act as ushers of peace as necessary to gaining their trust.

4.1.3.3 Community Stewards

Sixteen of 21 participants contemplate police officers as community stewards with a strong ethical core who take responsibility for helping and caring for the community. They view security provision as a commitment to the community's well-being and development, calling for officers who are actively engaged and involved in community life (Tommy, 27; Derek, 22; Anthony, 22; and Carlos, 30), and who sometimes take the lead by bringing everyone together (Elijah, 27, and Marcus, 25). Participants believe this ongoing demonstration of concern—of deep engagement—is what will inspire the community's trust, because it will prove they are genuine in their efforts to serve and protect. Elijah speaks tenderly as he shares his vision for police hosting a large-scale event in Downtown Durham. His aim is for people to relate to one another as human beings:

Maybe, like a speaker can come and give maybe a little intro? And talk a little bit, maybe a minute or two, and then maybe have an officer come up and talk. And, maybe somebody else come up and talk, like a regular person. And then, tell people, "We can all have a good conversation and have a good time, and there's food and stuff, and everybody just mingle, just talk." I think that would be real good. You never know what it might be able to do. I don't believe all police are bad. All of them is not. You've got some of them, but all of them is not bad. You've got some good cops. You've got people's husbands that's going out, people's wives that's going out, and they're good people. You know? They might go to church. They might not go to church. But, they're good people. They come and do their job in a respectful way, in a positive way, and protect their life, too, at the same time. They want to make it back home just like anybody else would want to.

Marcus seems to have a different objective from Elijah with his suggestions for police to convene community-focused events. Because he views police as often taking from the community, he suggests actions designed to give back to the community. He brainstorms ideas for the community's express benefit, thinking about what would make people's lives a little better or easier, or just cheer them up:

...do a fundraiser, do a get-together or something. You know, do something for the community. You want the community to trust you, do something for the community. Throw a police parade or something. Get police to come out here in these neighborhoods where a lot of these people are getting shot and killed and do something. Make a difference.

Marcus is not alone in his thinking. Malachi, 23, and Dion, 24, propose giving something material as a potential avenue for increasing trust, with Malachi saying, "they can start by donating to charity," and Dion setting his sights even higher: "Build something for the homeless. That's what I be hearing people talk about—that they don't do nothing for the homeless." The point here is that officers should give the community

something meaningful, something it truly needs. They are thinking of ways officers (and sheriffs) can serve and restore rather than harm and confiscate through initiating fines, fees, and evictions. For a community with so much need, participants collectively are saying that they want officers to roll up their sleeves, pitch in, and take responsibility for making things better. Even in Elijah's vision, police provide free food, beverages, and atmospherics, and they initiate vulnerability, because it is their responsibility to take the lead on solving the trust problem. Officers provide material benefit (food and drinks) at the outset, so they can get to the immaterial in which they are offering themselves—a window into their own humanity. These examples of community stewardship show reciprocity on a large scale, at the heart of participants' belief that officers must earn trust to get trust.

Stewardship reveals whether officers are genuinely well-intentioned, because pure motives would have to be sustained over long periods of time. Participants do not rely on occupation, societal position, or words to signal trustworthiness. They rely on people's actions to prove whether they are "genuine"—as Joseph, 20, puts it—and, therefore, deserving of their trust. Participants want the opportunity to observe for themselves whether people, including police officers, are doing the right things for the right reasons.

Consistent with the previous two chapters, participants prize integrity at the individual officer level and collective agency level. Eight of 21 participants want officers to have “integrity” (Joseph, 20) or something synonymous, such as being “honest” (Sean, 20), “straightforward” (Jay, 31), “a man of your word” (Elijah, 27) or “having good morals” (Tommy, 27). Furthermore, they want this integrity to manifest at the corporate level with officers demanding integrity of one another informally and formally. Malik, 28, talks about the power of example and how one officer can influence other officers to do better by improving his own ways and learning from mistakes. Malik says, “if that one officer changed his ways and the other officers around him...saw a change in him, it might affect them.” Yet, he, like Nathan, 30, also wants formal mechanisms enacted to assure integrity, so as not to allow poor behavior to normalize. Calling it “a great start” to increasing trust, Nathan says, “holding their own more accountable would go a long way.”

In the Community Stewardship model, police officers use their powers for good. They are so deeply engaged they know what the community needs and play an active role in coordinating provisions. They do good because they are good, and their desire to serve and protect the community are sincere.

4.1.4 Personal Relationships with Law Enforcement

In order to understand how rigid their perceptions of officers are and gain insight into how participants make sense of trust, I ask them if they know any police personally and, if so, to describe the nature of that relationship. Asking about personal relationships with officers could help identify examples of when officers had earned their trust and whether those circumstances could be applied more broadly.

4.1.4.1 Summary of Relationships

Figure 2: “Do You Have a Personal Relationship with a Police Officer?” shows a majority (13 of 21) have at least one personal relationship with a law enforcement officer.

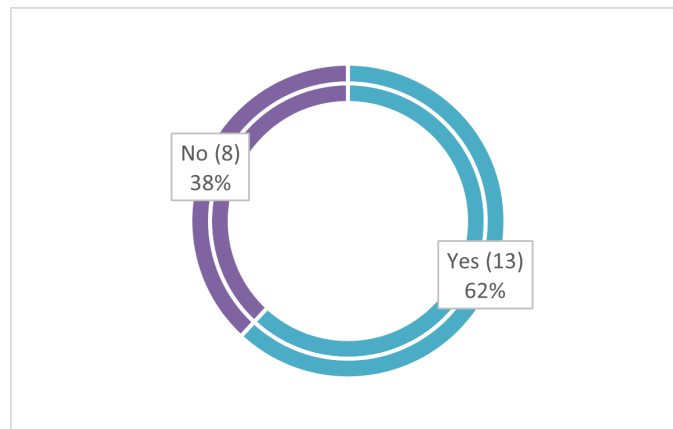


Figure 2: Do You Know Any Police Personally?

For participants with relationships, the number and nature of those relationships vary. On the next page, “Table 6: Personal Relationship with Law Enforcement” shows

the kinds of personal relationships participants have as well as the number and proportion of participants with each kind of relationship.

Table 6: Personal Relationships with Law Enforcement

Nature of Relationship	#P	%PwR	%T
Family	6	46%	29%
Friend	2	15%	10%
Acquaintance	5	38%	24%
Met through On-Duty Role	4	31%	19%
At least two relationships	5	38%	24%
Out of ...participants?		13	21
Key: #P is for Number of Participants, %PwR is share of Participants with Relationships, and %T is for share of Total Participants.			

Of the 13 participants with relationships, six participants have them with family members (four with cousins, one with an uncle, and one with two immediate family members), two have relationships with friends, five with acquaintances (former neighbors, classmates, and either friends of friends or family of friends), and four formed relationships through the officer's on-duty capacities (three with School Resource Officers and one with a patrol officer). Five participants have at least two personal relationships, with three coming from across categories and two from within the same category.

Participants also vary in the detail they use to describe the nature of their personal relationships. Justin, 27, says he has a cousin who is a police officer and offers nothing more while Otis, 20; Sean, 20; and Dion 24, report names, jurisdiction, and rank.

In a similar vein, their varying levels of closeness are not always evident or intuitive. Sure, officer relationships in the acquaintance category indicate some distance, because they are relationships formed through indirect means or because encounters are happenstance (such as Tommy, 27, and Sean, 20, interacting with off-duty officers through mutual friends in a social setting). And, of course, officers described as friends are close relationships, which is only the case for Marcus, 25, who respects his childhood friend who later became a police officer, and Dion, 24, who has three personal relationships with law enforcement. He identifies his cousin who became a sheriff after leaving the Marines, and the immediate family members of two different friends who later became police officers, all of whom checked on him and his brother throughout adolescence and even took them out to eat sometimes.

However, family does not always translate to closeness, either because they were never close or because the two have drifted apart. Ellis, 24, trusts his cousin who is a detective and acknowledges (as previously mentioned) that he helped him get an assault charge dropped while he was in foster care. But, he says he “ain’t wanted to talk with him” or “seen him in awhile.” Though Ellis had visited his aunt (the officer’s mother) over Thanksgiving and heard his cousin was in town, he made no effort to get together, saying, “I don’t really deal with him like that.”

Conversely, a participant might express a particular fondness for an officer he met while on duty. Otis, 20, mentions his cousin who is a captain and then lights up when giving the name of his middle school resource officer, because he was “just a cool officer..., so we just talked a lot.” Jay, 31, is charismatic though careful to avoid over-socializing with officers (not wanting to be seen as a “snitch”). Still, he concedes even he has made friends among officers because of so frequently “getting in trouble.”

Despite the fact that it is not always clear how close their personal relationships are, or how much they might trust that individual officer, it is useful to have a sense of how many participants have personal ties to law enforcement and how they make sense of those connections. Asking about personal relationships provides participants an additional opportunity to shed light on whether some of their beliefs and preferences are stated in the abstract or based on real people.

4.1.4.2 Linkages Between Relationships and Trust

Twelve of 21 participants answered either they do not trust anyone they do not know or that their trust would have to be earned, when asked why they do not trust police. Does this mean that officers who make the effort to build relationships can earn some people’s trust who wouldn’t otherwise trust them? And, would trust for one, or two, or more officers be allowed as exceptions? Or, could there be a willingness to apply trust to officers more broadly? Testing these questions or understanding the effects of an

officer's efforts on community members to build trust are beyond the scope of this dissertation. But, when examining linkages between trust and relationship among participants, there are a few notable takeaways.

Importantly, there are gradations to responses about whether participants trust police. We can think about the Hard No, Lean No, It Depends, Lean Yes, and Hard Yes answers as categories of trust or willingness to trust. "Hard No" indicates that these participants do not trust at all and express no willingness to extend trust. The majority of those who report having no personal relationship are concentrated here (6 of 8 participants). When considering all four categories with some willingness to extend trust—Lean No, It Depends, Lean Yes, and Hard Yes—majority (9 of 11) have personal relationships with law enforcement. Only Elijah, 27, who falls into the Lean No category and Travis, 24 in It Depends report having no personal relationship.

The next two bar charts visualize the link between personal relationships and willingness to trust police among the interview cohort. In "Figure 3: Relationships & Willingness to Trust – Binary Categories," participants' status of "Have Relationship" versus "No Relationship" is displayed by "No Willingness" to trust at all (Hard No) versus "Some Willingness" to trust (every other category—Lean No, It Depends, Lean Yes, and Hard Yes).

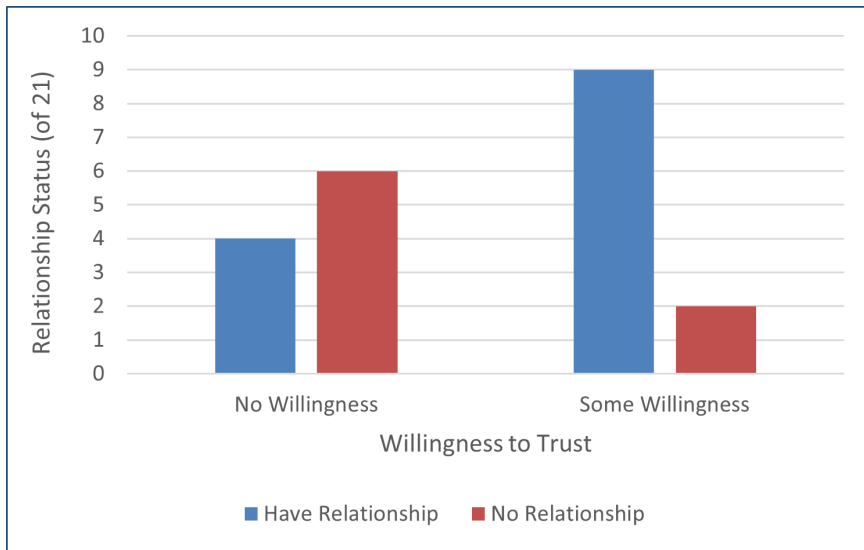


Figure 3: Relationship & Willingness to Trust, Binary Categories

Figure 3 shows that most who report a willingness to trust have a relationship with at least one officer. The figure also shows that most who report no willingness to trust police at all do not have a relationship with an officer. Figure 4 displays participants' relationship status across all five categories of willingness to trust, from Hard No to Hard Yes. The link between participants' personal relationships and their willingness to trust officers is even more stark visually. The number reporting no relationship becomes fewer as willingness to trust increases.

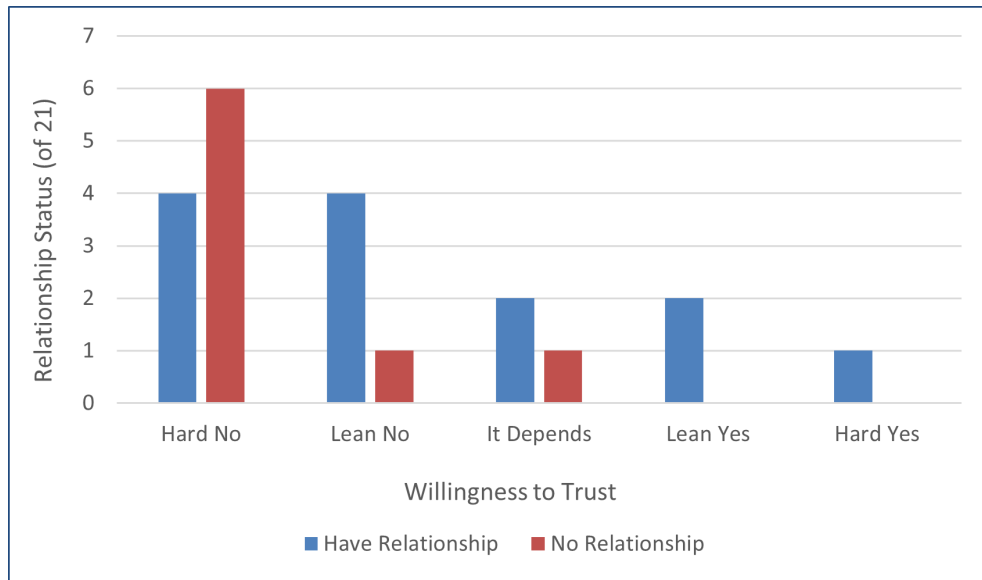


Figure 4: Relationships & Willingness to Trust, All Five Categories

However, I will stop short of drawing any conclusions, because there are several possible interpretations. Of note, four Hard No respondents report having a relationship. Marcus, 25, has a childhood friend who grew up and became a police officer whom he lauds for his authenticity, compassion, and culturally competent policing. Malik, 28, speaks of a childhood neighbor friend that also later became a police officer. He makes a point to speak whenever they run into each other. Justin, 27, mentions a cousin with no further elaboration, and Sean, 20, mentions an uncle in a neighboring jurisdiction, his years of tenure, and rank with no additional elaboration.

Some participants have personal relationships with law enforcement due to reasons not of their choosing. They might be related to the officer, or they might have had the relationship years before the person ever became an officer. People may process those relationships differently. Some might trust that particular officer but not others. Some might not trust that officer fully, just because they happen to be related to them, or just because the person happens to be a friend of a friend. And, even if someone did trust that one officer, they might choose to ignore the profession and purposely not think of them as an officer or choose to limit their trust to that one officer—viewing it as the exception they will allow.

Conversely, it is not entirely clear for participants with relationships whether they are more willing to trust because they have one or more positive relationships, or if their willingness to trust created more opportunities to form relationships—particularly ones of their choosing.

These linkages between relationship and trust among the interview cohort could potentially help us understand one reason participants' views about officers appear to be both nuanced and somewhat dynamic. However, further questioning with this group would be needed to explore that possibility.

In terms of the larger picture, I do not mean to imply that participants' unwillingness to trust, or their struggle to trust officers, is a problem that can or should

be solved merely through one-on-one relationship-building. Police agencies must resolve participants' complaints about the structural actions agencies take to insulate officers from the community, the patterned ways in which they violate people's rights and ideals, and the ways in which they endanger people. These are the specific themes that emerge for why participants do not trust police, and the department would have to seriously contend with and demonstrate improvement in these areas in order to see a marked rise in trust levels. What is important about the relationship discussion is that it provides a window into the extent to which so many people do humanize officers, both as they demand police agencies humanize them, and as they endure the caricaturing of their views from outsiders.

4.2 Discussion

Asked if they trust police, it turns out the yes or no question is anything but. The degrees of trust are so marked, they consist of five clear categories ranging from Hard No to Hard Yes. Though a strong minority do not trust police, a majority trust or are willing to trust police to a varying extent. The most important reason participants who extend any trust do so, is because they say police have earned that trust, meaning they have made the effort and time to prove they are committed to the participant's and/or their community's well-being.

Similarly, when reflecting on why they do not trust police, the majority indicates police—just like any other stranger—have not done anything to specifically earn their trust (by proving themselves committed to the participant’s well-being). Participants also consider structural reasons important for determining the appropriate amount of trust to extend police. Some have a hard time handing trust over when they see officers as systemically disconnected and unaccountable to anyone. Connection, intimacy, reciprocity, relationship, and accountability are all bound up with one another and necessary to give or gift one’s trust—which, clearly, participants see as a sacrificial act requiring vulnerability. Finally, they consider officers’ behavior when evaluating whether to extend trust. Participants distrust officers when they violate their constitutional rights and ideals, particularly when it comes to being dishonest, prejudging them, and exhibiting cruel behavior. They also distrust officers when they threaten to harm them through aggressive language and physical intimidation. Documentation of officer harm through video footage as well as close proximity to officer harm—such as being injured by officers or experiencing the loss of someone close who was killed by police officers—reinforce concerns about officer threats as credible.

To increase trust, participants recommend three key strategies for building individual and communal relationship. They invite officers to humble themselves, eradicating the hierarchy that undermines their citizenship and personhood, and

bridging the disconnect. Just as their trust is a sacrifice and gift to officers, participants require a sacrifice in exchange. They call on officers to give of themselves, to trust the community and to show their humanity. Secondly, they require police to become agents of peace, bringing peace when they enter and restoring peace before they exit. A competent police force would behave in a composed fashion, de-escalate situations, and minimize victimization. Finally, they want officers to serve as community stewards by diving in headfirst and proactively seeking to be helpful. They want officers to know the community intimately and understand precisely what the community needs to be and feel secure. Such large-scale efforts would prove they genuinely have the community's interests at heart. Participants prize integrity and need a signal for identifying who has it. Community stewardship affords participants the opportunity to observe consistency in officers' actions over time to determine whether they are trustworthy, thereby *earning* their trust.

While having a tie to an officer or two is not sufficient for trusting them broadly, it is notable that those who are willing to trust tend to have relationships more than those who are not. Perhaps, this is one reason why we observe so much nuance and variation in participants' views and feelings regarding police. Perhaps it is also one reason they collectively paint such a vivid picture of what a police force could be—a picture not wholly conjured by imagination but inspired by exemplars.

4.3 Policy Recommendations

The central takeaway is that police agencies and individual officers have to earn trust one person at a time. And, to the extent that structural conditions of integrity and accountability remain unresolved allowing dishonesty, prejudice, and mean-spiritedness to remain commonplace, trust earned by one officer will not transfer easily or necessarily to a new, unknown officer. The following are recommendations for Durham Police Department and other policymakers:

R1. Hiring leaders should examine how the Durham Police Department defines, regards, and weights subjective—and often consequential—characteristics such as toughness or strength, readiness, weakness, and kindness throughout the application process, including in its psychological evaluations. They should determine which qualities being emphasized or privileged in the hiring process are at odds with trust-building, and align their vetting processes with the goal of having officers who are capable of building trust.

R2. Training leaders should examine the extent to which honesty, fairness, and dignity are set out as expectations in academy training when interacting with the public. Rather than a legal compliance model in which recruits are taught to do what the law (or case law) allows (such as giving a pretext for a traffic stop), the department should aim for the highest ethical standards in how it guides officers to act.

R3. The Department should cease any surveillance programs in Black neighborhoods in which all or most residents are treated as potential suspects.

R4. The Department should redistribute officers to be optimally constructive, with officers either responding to calls, solving crimes, or engaged in partnership with community to prevent crime, restore peace, fellowship, or help to meet basic needs.

R5. The Department must increase accountability measures and how it handles communication regarding accountability:

- a. Officers should be re-assigned from communities that have requested their removal. Though officers might have a right to their job under the law, or though there may be insufficient evidence in certain cases to sustain community complaints, communities should not have officers it deems harmful and dangerous imposed upon them by the state. The Department should create a mechanism that would allow communities to have officers removed from their area.
- b. The Department should be consistent in its communication to the public in officer-involved shootings or deaths. It should not withhold information about the involved officer(s) pending investigation while making derogatory statements about the civilian, including their criminal history and alleged character.
- c. The Department should apologize when it harms a member of the community as should its officers when appropriate. Concerns about future lawsuits often discourage much-needed apologies, which are crucial for building trust.
- d. Even when officers' actions are justified, the Department should make an effort to communicate and explain policies, procedures, or decisions that may upset community members, preferably beforehand when reactions are foreseeable.
- e. The Department should ensure its community involvement and leadership is systematized and properly funded rather than piecemeal, volunteer-based, and shoestring. It should be treated as a strategic priority and led as such.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter describes the ways in which participants make sense of trust. Using responses to five questions about whether participants trust officers, their reasons,

improving trust, and whether and how they know police personally, I find that most participants state they are willing to extend some level of trust to officers when officers do what is necessary to earn it. And, the vast majority of participants offer ideas for how agencies and officers can try to earn their trust, which includes agencies enforcing and reinforcing integrity through accountability measures, and officers behaving in a way that is humble and fair-minded, that brings peace to the community, and who serve as community stewards. I also find that most of the participants have ties to law enforcement, a surprising fact about their social networks given how fervently divided police and community are thought to be in these kinds of neighborhoods. Though it is unclear which direction relationship and trust may go in, and how much one may affect the other, these findings showing linkages between relationship and willingness to trust, raise the importance of further inquiry.

5. Chapter Five: Conclusion

I'd make the United States more of a democracy, for real. 'Cause we're not. We're not really a democracy. We really ain't got as much say-so as people think, honestly. People don't notice it. We just think we do because they show us the bad in other countries, and we think we got more freedom. Because they don't show the good. It's just like when they show us overseas, they show the good over here and they don't show the bad over here. You see what I'm saying? Make us more of a democracy, 'cause we're not. That's just the title we got, but we're not a democracy though.

Anthony, 22

I would tell [politicians to] more so hear the letter, not the law of what's being said. And, try to understand people's feelings, not just what they're saying. What comes out of their mouth is ultimately influenced by how they feel. So, if you can understand how someone feels, then you're more so to meet their expectations. Not just do what they tell you to do. To say it in other words, when you understand how someone feels, you're more so to not necessarily make the same mistake again...If they understand how we feel when they're reading the analysis and not just see *what* we're saying—but see *in* what we are saying, like how we feel—it would help them make better decisions about how to accommodate what we're saying.

Joseph, 20

There is not near enough knowledge of what those who suffer the worst effects of crime and policing want and need to be and feel safe. And, of those who have sought such understanding, even fewer have chosen a qualitative path, asking this population to explain it in their own words, relaying their own logic.

Though this cohort of only 21 young, Black men selected from a physical area of roughly two square miles contains wide-ranging beliefs and hold deeply nuanced opinions, they see themselves as everyday men, very much representative of Americans

if not humanity. While accounting for the challenging circumstances of their surroundings, they do not believe their needs and wants, their concerns and aspirations are anything but normal, natural, and universal.

To them, anyone would want a safe place to live and play, not overrun by gangs, child predators, murderers, and hardcore drug pushers. To them, anybody would want to enjoy the right to be innocent until proven guilty, to be able to walk the streets and gather with friends without being accosted by the government, and a right to life and well-being when interacting with governing bodies. What is not covered by their rights as citizens, should be covered by human rights, they reason. In their exasperation with police, we hear a call for predictable, reliable service—something they believe their White counterparts enjoy and they are entitled to as their birthright. In the problems and solutions they enumerate throughout their interviews, their blueprint for quality control emerges.

In Chapter Two, I find that over three-quarters of participants have a mixed assessment of police, meaning they have positive and negative feelings toward police because they appreciate their role in society while holding concerns about the riskiness of officers who exercise poor judgment, invasiveness, and brutality. A third of participants report updating their beliefs over time with three growing more wary of police, particularly with rising media attention to police killings, and four acquiring

more positive views after their experiences with caring officers. Their assessment criteria reveal a desire to increase policing predictability in two key ways. One is to shrink the range of possible negative outcomes, for example, by taking possible death off of the table for getting pulled over for a minor driving infraction. The second is by smoothing fluctuations in interactions so that there is a reliable logic between their own actions and officers' actions or reactions.

Stop Harming and Threatening Us, Be Part of the Community, Protect Us from Criminal Threats, Mediate and Problem-Solve, and Do What's Right comprise a strategy for raising the chances officers will have a positive versus negative impact. Whether it's boosting the numbers of pleasant encounters, removing more criminal elements from the streets and neighborhoods, increasing the number of peaceful resolutions to disputes, or minimizing unlawful and unethical decisions, assessment criteria are participants' roadmap to police reliably protecting and serving them.

Stop Harming and Threatening Us articulates both the desire to remove the highest risks and to even out what can feel like arbitrary flexes of power by officers to control a situation that is already under control in participants' estimation. For Be Part of the Community, participants make the calculation that officers being in the community will motivate them to want to be more consistently positive as they realize there is goodness there worth protecting, particularly embodied in its youth.

With Protect Us from Criminal Threats, participants judge police based on whether they are consistently effective in stopping threats. In their own lives, they loathe the disruption criminals have cost them personally—their own near misses with death, their losses of parents to drug addiction, their losses of dear friends to senseless homicides. They believe police have the wherewithal to quell violence and chaos, and to solve crimes, if only their competence could be relied upon.

In Mediate and Problem-Solve, participants again seek to limit the negative outcomes by shifting officers from ticketing and arresting to using communication and informal mechanisms to resolve misunderstandings and disputes. With Do What's Right, participants seek to shore up gaps between what they expect of police in terms of adherence to constitutional and ethical norms and what they might be seeing in practice. Again, they want police to be predictably or reliably lawful and ethical.

In Chapter Three, detailing participants' vision of an ideal police officer, they share their desired personality traits, behaviors, and values. Given they believe police are too unpredictable, they select characteristics they believe will secure the best likelihood of reducing officer harm and threat, increasing their engagement with community, protecting them from criminal threats, mediating and problem-solving, and doing what is right legally and ethically. Interestingly, their strategy for smoothing unpredictability is not to pivot to rigid regimes that restrict discretion but rather for

departments to select higher quality officers with superior judgment who use their discretion wisely. Preferring nimble officers to robotic ones, participants call for protectors who are just, professional, communicative, invested, and composed. They believe these qualities will equip offices to more predictably balance their freedom and safety, both of which they have had to sacrifice all too often.

In Chapter Four, we see the consequences of unpredictability manifest in low trust levels. Though most participants are willing to extend some level of trust to police officers, a critical mass shares that they do not trust anyone who has not proven themselves. The challenge for police is two-fold. The first is changing the structural mechanisms that increase trustworthiness such as intervening when rogue officers overstep and/or holding each other accountable for misconduct; resolving that officers will bring peace to situations rather than dominate them; and partnering with community as stewards committed to community members' individual and collective success. The second is building relationships one at a time with a humble demeanor and fair decision-making. By taking these steps at the individual officer and departmental levels, police will demonstrate they can be trusted as participants are better able to predict their engagement will lead to desirable—or at least reasonable—outcomes.

Twenty-five policy recommendations across Chapters Two, Three, and Four propose guidelines for aligning the department's recruitment, hiring, training,

commendations, promotions, and disciplinary processes with the participants' assessment criteria, desired officer attributes, and suggestions for trust-building. The purpose of the recommendations is to forge a tighter connection between participants' expectations of officers and the outcomes they are getting. The following is a synopsis of their target outcomes:

- hiring policies that select more even-tempered, less biased officers with a record of problem-solving and service;
- clear departmental standards that promote the value of human life and dignity, and emphasize service and community partnership;
- training that equips officers to manage their own emotions and safely resolve disputes;
- accountability that ensures departmental integrity, including imposing penalties, better communication with community members, and apologies when appropriate;
- committing officers systematically to serve weekly shifts in the community for the purposes of giving back and investing in relationships and community success;
- enhancing criminal investigations for homicide and attempted homicide as well as follow-up with victims and witnesses; and
- providing communities a mechanism to remove consent for officers who have lost their trust and confidence.

5.1 Limitations

There are two potential limitations to the study. One, it was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, forcing me to end abruptly after the 21st interview rather than after my target of 25-30 interviews. I would have had to change my recruitment and interview methods from the previous interviewees to continue, which I was concerned would potentially bias the sample or its responses. Very few of the places in which I had

previously advertised remained open once the government forced non-essential businesses (like barber shops) and government entities to close (such as recreation centers, schools, and libraries). Though I could continue to recruit through convenience stores and take-out restaurants, I was concerned about the ethical implications of offering \$50 cash early on in the pandemic.

Even if I had recruited more interviewees, it would have been prudent to switch to a phone interview, since not all men would have had access to technology to conduct a video interview. Here, I was concerned young men would not be as likely to sustain two-hour conversations over the phone (as they regularly did in person) and maintain the same level of privacy I secured in person (which allowed men to share extremely sensitive information). Thus, I opted to end the study with 21 participants. I do not believe my results would have changed substantially as there were several strong themes that emerged, but I cannot be certain.

A second potential limitation to the study is that I completed interviews prior to the re-energized Black Lives Matter-led protests in summer of 2020, in the wake of the police killings of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd. Subsequently, the Defund the Police movement gained traction, which potentially shifted the Overton Window of possible policy reforms to ones that were more progressive or radical than previously thought.

I was aware of the Defund the Police movement at the time I conducted the study; however, I made the deliberate decision not to raise questions about terms or processes of which they might have been unaware. The purpose of my study was to understand what organically rose up from this population, to understand what items were at top of mind as it pertained to policing. When allowed to initiate their own opinions and philosophies, it is striking that only two participants—Marcus and Anthony—at any time articulated a desire for a significantly smaller police force, let alone abolishing it.

That said, there is evidence from participants' responses that they would support increased government spending in the areas Defund the Police proponents typically advocate. Participants' widespread endorsement of fully staffed and equipped police forces are difficult to square with calls for a dramatically reduced police force in the short term. However, it is possible participants would be open to seeing a sort of right-sized police force at some point in the future when they felt crime was under control. It is also possible some participants would have changed their mind on this issue if interviewed in the latter part of 2020 or early 2021. Either way, having a record of opinion captured on the cusp of societal upheaval is valuable and offers a unique opportunity for comparison with future work interviewing this population.

5.2 Significance of this Study

What legitimacy literature misses is this population's meta-awareness—its meta-analysis—to determine if police merit deference. Does it matter that police prevent, stop, and solve crime? Participants' statements unflinchingly convey how important police effectiveness is to their sense of safety. Does it matter that police give civilians a chance to be heard, act as impartial interveners, treat civilians with respect and dignity, and communicate a sincere interest in their well-being? The evidence from participants is overwhelming that procedural justice processes register as critical to their sense of fairness—and, in turn, safety.

What is also true is that these Black men surrounded by poverty and violence are making constant calculations about risk. In noting the breadth of possible outcomes and capricious fluctuations in daily decision-making by some officers, they largely find the current levels of unpredictability among police to be unacceptable. Their answers for reform—for how their assessment criteria and by extension the standards departments should attain, attributes officers should have, and the methods they should use to build trust—drive toward lopping off worst scenario outcomes and smoothing the logic of interactions to fashion an institution that is predictable. Moreover, they forge this ideal of a reliable institution precisely because of their identity as Americans and as human beings owed certain inalienable rights.

In effect, they are asking police—in a manner I have shown is often open to receiving new information and subject to change — “Can I count on you to protect me?” “Do we have an understanding?” “I have paid you (in tax dollars). I have been told about you all my life—that you would be there to serve and protect me, but do we have a contract?” Their answers show that while their contract with the government is in serious doubt, participants believe the contract *should* exist for them.

By taking two hours to envision with me what a legitimate, democratic policing institution would look like, they reveal that they still hold out hope after all.

Appendix A – Interview Guide

Section I: Background

1. What's your age?
2. Who were the people you lived with growing up? Adults? Kids?
3. **How would you describe the neighborhood(s) you grew up in?** What were the homes like? The yards/playgrounds? The businesses? The neighbors?
4. Some people would say their family was comfortable for the most part growing up, others say their family struggled with money. What was your situation like?

Section II: Philosophies on Police-Community Relationship

5. Thinking back about your very first experience with police, what do you recall about that interaction?
6. **Growing up, did your family ever talk about the police?** What did they say? What about to your siblings? Did they say the same thing, or was anything different? Did you have more than one discussion? What do you think their goal was with the conversations?
7. What are your feelings now about police?
8. **How do you think society describes the purpose of police** (in movies, books, TV, school, etc.)? What do you think society/media gets right/wrong about police? About community? About criminals? About victims?¹
9. What do you think the purpose of police should be?
10. Some people say the police-community relationship is bad and others disagree. They say that the relationship overall between police and

¹ I struck this question after the seventh interview. It took too much time to answer and answers were not useful.

community is good, but naturally police and criminals don't get along.

What do you think?

- a. Can you think of anything that is good about the relationship? Like what? What do you think would make the relationship better?
 - b. Can you think of anything that is hurting the relationship? What do you think would make it worse?
11. Now think about the police-community relationship where you live. Do you think the relationship is good or bad between the people in your neighborhood and police?²
 12. There's a lot of debate about whether police are trustworthy. Do you trust police? Why or why not?
 13. **I've heard different arguments about respect.** Some people say people don't respect cops. Some people say cops don't respect the people, especially young people. Some people say these are unfair stereotypes and both sides usually respect one another. **What do you think? How could officers show more respect?**
 14. What can officers do to increase trust people would place in them?

Section III: Experiences with Police

15. **Have you ever been asked or told by an officer to do something?** Walk me through that experience? What was that like for you?
 - a. What was going through your mind when the officer gave the order/made the request?
 - b. How did you feel when all of this was happening?
 - c. How did you decide what to do?
 - d. What did you decide in the end?
 - e. How did you communicate that decision? What was the goal? Did it work?
 - f. Did what you thought would happen actually happen?
 - g. What did you take away from that experience?

² I struck this question by the fifth interview because interviewees tended to answer in terms of their local neighborhoods for the question before it versus speaking more generally. So, it turned out to be redundant.

16. **Have you ever had a crime committed against you?** Can you tell me about your experience? How did you decide whether or not to report?
17. **Have you ever seen a crime take place?** What happened? What did you decide to do?
18. **Have police ever asked for your help with a crime?** For example, have police ever asked you what you witnessed, to testify, or to help with a case? What was your experience?
 - a. When they asked you to help, what did you think? What were all of the things you were considering?
 - b. How did you make the choice of whether to cooperate?

Section IV: Civilian Assessment of Police

19. **Can you imagine any circumstances under which you might call the police or go to a police station?** Report a crime? How would you go about making that decision? What are the things you would consider?
20. How do you judge whether police are doing a good job? What would police have to do in order to get an A in your book?
21. Are there any personality traits you think are especially important for police officers to have?
22. What are behaviors you think are important for officers?
23. Are there any values, morals, ethics, or standards you think are important for officers to have?
24. We've been talking a lot about individual officers, but are there behaviors or decisions you think are important for police departments as a whole?
25. Do you know any police personally? How would you describe that relationship?
26. Aside from what we talked about earlier, have you ever had any other interaction with a police officer? (Y/N) If yes, please tell me about that. What was that like? Was there anything that surprised you about the interaction, or was it what you expected? How did this surprise you/meet

with your expectations? What had you believed before this experience?
How did this change?

27. Thinking about your most recent experience with police, was there anything you liked about the officer's behavior? Was there anything you did not like about the officer's behavior?
28. Have you ever seen police interact with anyone else in a way that really stands out? It could be positive or negative.
29. As you've gotten older, have any of your feelings about police changed with time, or have they stayed the same? How so?

Section V: Cool Down Questions

30. **If you had a magic wand and could make a perfect interaction happen between an officer and a civilian, what would you do? You can choose any scenario.** Walk me through from beginning to end. It could be any interaction—a house call, a traffic stop, something while a person is walking. You decide the kind of interaction and tell me how you would make it perfect.
31. How could police increase your confidence in their ability to do a good job?
32. If you could have the full attention and concern of anyone in power to fix or improve anything, what would you change? Who would it be?
33. Do you think the way officers are trained is good or bad? Is there anything you think would make the training better?

Section VI: Survey Questions

34. What was the highest grade level you completed?
35. What were the highest grade levels your parents/guardians completed? List person and education level.
36. Are your parents or grandparents immigrants? (Yes/No) If yes, which country(ies) did they emigrate from?

37. **Which best describes your religious identity or beliefs?** (Please choose.)
Christian (Protestant or Catholic), Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu,
Atheist, Agnostic, Other, Don't Know, Not Sure
38. Have you ever been arrested? (Yes/No)
39. Have you ever been convicted of a crime? (Yes/No)

For the next few questions, I'm going to give you options for how to answer. Choose the one that best fits. If you'd like me to repeat the question, no problem. I'll repeat.

40. **How much do you relate, or not, to African Americans shown in media killed by police officers?**

I don't relate at all, I relate a little, I relate a lot, that could easily be me.

41. **How likely do you think it is that someone close to you could be hurt or killed by a police officer?**

That could never happen, there's a small chance it could happen, there's a good chance it could happen, it will probably happen.

42. **How likely do you think it is that you could be hurt by a police officer?**

That could never happen, there's a small chance it could happen, there's a good chance it could happen, it will probably happen.

Okay, that's the end of those questions. Switching gears...

43. Can you recall whether your parents ever participated in politics, such as voting, attending meetings, registering others to vote, volunteering on a campaign, marching for a cause, or running for office? (Yes/No) If yes, how often would you say they participated in politics? Occasionally, sometimes, or all the time?
44. Do you recall your parents being active in the community such as church involvement, school involvement, sports teams, clubs, non-profit organizations/charities, or organizing block parties, etc.? (Yes/No) If yes, how often would you say they participated in these activities? Occasionally, sometimes, or all the time?

45. What kind of work do you do?
46. How many people are in your household now?
47. Do you or your family rent or own your home?
48. Do you have any children?

SECTION VII: Final Questions

49. Is there anything else I didn't ask you that you would like to tell me about?
50. Do you have any questions for me?

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Biography

Ajenai Clemmons graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations, Latin American History, and Spanish from Drake University in Des Moines, IA, in 2002, having studied abroad in Chile and Guatemala. She served the City and County of Denver as a Community Relations Ombudsman while completing her Master of Public Policy at the University of Denver in 2007. Through her role as Ombudsman, she helped establish a new government agency, the Office of the Independent Monitor, that oversees investigations of police and sheriff misconduct. Ajenai then served as Policy Director for a national professional association of Black state legislators in Washington, D.C. where she led a team of policy and communications professionals in apprising lawmakers of trends and model legislation.

Ajenai has been awarded external grant funding for her research from Open Society Initiative for Europe under the Open Society Foundations and the American Political Science Association Centennial Grant. She won the following competitive funds from the Duke University Graduate School: James B. Duke International Travel Research Fellowship, Third-Year and Beyond Summer Research Awards, Aleane Webb Dissertation Research Award, and Award for Conference Travel. Ajenai has also been awarded the Ph.D. Small Grant Award and Policy Bridge Engagement Grant Award from Duke University's Sanford School of Public Policy; the Gender & Race Research

Award from the Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies Program; and the Graduate Student Award from the Duke Center for International & Global Studies.

Ajenai was also selected for the following competitive fellowships across Duke: Joel L. Fleishman Civil Society Ph.D. Fellowship, Dean's Graduate Fellowship and the Society of Duke Fellows, the Brown-Nagin Graduate Fellowship, and Kenan Institute for Ethics Graduate Fellowship. Prior to arriving at Duke, she was selected for the following competitive fellowships: American Political Science Association Minority Student Fellowship, Marshall Memorial Fellowship from the German Marshall Fund of the United States, the Truman National Security Project Fellowship, the National Organization of Black Elected Legislative Women's Leadership Institute, and the Colorado Institute for Leadership Training.

Ajenai's professional accomplishments and commitment to inclusion have been recognized by the Colorado Statesman Newspaper, the Diversity in National Security Network, Drake University's Alumni Association, and Duke University's Samuel DuBois Cook Society.